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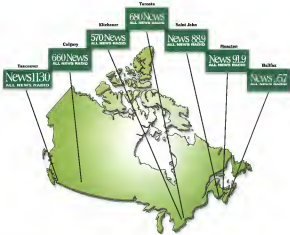


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could only dream of. Ask most boomers if they grew up in 2,600 sq.-foot houses with excessive mortgages, big screen TVs, and SUVs. Or if their parents bought them PlayStation and laptops. It is time we stopped blaming government and the economy for our dilemmas, self-inflicted debt loads and learned to differentiate between a comfortable lifestyle and one where every material desire of parent and child must be satisfied at any cost. Perhaps the current economic upheaval will apply a much-needed correction to these deluded, unrealistic, and unsustainable expectations.

Stewart Leibman, Belleville, Ont.

NOT OUR MAN

PAUL ZED is not the Liberal MP for Saint John (New Brunswick, Feb. 16). Former M2 yes, but generally, Conservative Rodney Weston is the ruling representative after a winning Paul Zed in the last election.

Joanne Baker, Saint John, N.B.

SAD TORY

ALONG WITH Andrew Coyne and many other Canadians, I am disappointed in Stephen Harper's failure to adhere to his own Conservative agenda ("Harper's Tories lost the plot a long, long time ago," Opinion, Feb. 16). But Coyne is being more than disingenuous to blame Harper for the failure, which must be laid at the feet of Canada's four-party political system, in which the two minor parties are blatantly left wing and one of the majors depends largely on left-of-centre voters for its support. Add a U.S. led by the Canadiana add and unwaveringly left wing President Obama, and any Canadian leader today must follow in lockstep behind the present U.S. per se not economic policies. See transit Gloria Alexander-McGag, Calgary

ANDREW COYNE's scathing criticism of the plan Harper and the Tories is well justified. Harper once promised he would never tax income trusts, nor would he ever touch sen-

iors' nest eggs. Well, I'm a senator, and he touched my nest egg. In fact, he almost destroyed it. He also promised letters only every four years—in legislation it—crafts was incoherent for him. He played business-ship politics when no operations and compromise were needed. Ultimately he did negotiate—everything—due taking in his parents and having started down the slope. I was a and carrying Conservative until Ron Campbell. With the "new Conservatives" led by Harper, I signed up again.

But Harper was soon down to the mud with all the other piggies. I am now totally disappointed and disheartened with "Conservatives" and their ilk.

Shirleene Rowth, Hantsburg, Ont.

ANDREW COYNE has it right when he says conservative fiscal philosophy is dead in Canada. The current budget was written by the opposite parties, who ponder to the economic implications of the country—that means most of us. The man speaks loudly of our inability to understand the true nature of wealth. Real economic value is generated when someone invents, manufactures, and sells something that the rest of us want to buy. This is the process that made North America the powerhouse of the 20th century. But we have forgotten all that and imagine that we can somehow spend our way to prosperity. We cheat ourselves and our children by devoting our resources with debt instead of directing our efforts and policies toward the creation of new wealth. Where have the leaders gone?

Jennifer Schmitt, Edmonton

ETHICAL CRISIS

IF I UNDERSTAND Barbara Amos's opinion correctly ("Off with the hedge fund on age's hand?" Opinion, Feb. 16), her stance is to bring rationality into the discussion of how we got into this financial and economic crisis. I would add that the crisis in moral and ethical values, as well as in lack of vision for the future, is even bigger. I would still hold the management of this responsible, for it is there where the creative test of power resides, and ultimately that is where standards are set. No matter what the details, privilege is, almost all, responsibility. Kristi Karsenshelen, Toronto

WALRUS SPEAKS

AN EXECUTIVE director of the charitable, non-profit Walrus Foundation, I was surprised to see that Rebecca Elder's article regarding Margaret Atwood's unique contribution to our fundraising efforts ("Atwood sees all," Society, Feb. 16) made not one mention of the Walrus Foundation at which Elder purchased the item. Atwood's production raised \$10,000 for the Walrus Foundation, an organization that advances Canadian writers, artists, and screenwriters.

readers and story. The Walrus is a very different animal from Mother's, and it is not as all. Shelley Anderson, Publisher, The Walrus, Toronto

TWO CENTS

ALL TOO FREQUENTLY, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) and Canada Post want to blame a two-cent mailing



ARE OUR LEADERS sharing our children out of a future?

JENNIFER SCHMITT



A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF HUGO CHÁVEZ

Venezuela's megalomaniac president finally got his wish this week, narrowly winning a referendum on a controversial amendment that will allow him to keep running for president in perpetuity. But the victory, on his second crack, may end up being pyrrhic. Oil revenues—90 per cent of the national income—have plunged by 75 per cent since July, inflation is running at 50 per cent, and there is speculation that the country's economy will soon be devastated. Too bad they can't export hot air.

Good news

Rage therapy

Last week, former students of the Port Alberni Indian Residential School laid waste to the building that housed the thoughts and aspirations of generations. They ripped off the siding and burned piles of wood—and it was good. "It felt a sense of release today, like there isn't a monster here," said one participant. In Seattle last year, survivors tore apart their school with a similar sense of purpose. True, it's a symbolic, but it carries a sense of control. Certainly it is more tangible than the boardroom federal residential school Truth and Reconciliation Commission, now without leadership, and accomplishing nothing.

Home alone

On the eve of Barack Obama's trip to Ottawa, Omar Khadr's lawyers released a "manifesto" plan that they hoped would convince the U.S. President—and Prince William's Meghan Harper—to free the infamous 15-year-old from his hell on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The plan includes psychological counselling, religious instruction—and a promise not to live with his best ladies-loving family. Even his mother, known for posing inside bombers and beating homosexuals, has vowed to keep her distance from young Omar. "I only need to see him once and hug him a big, big hug," she says. Mom will be badgering the bouncer back. She's in much to blame as anyone for his seven-year island bummer.

A return to civility

The RCMP has finally moved to restore civility with a renewed court policy, after years of dropping there was a problem. Recognizing the risk of death (especially in aged individuals),

which like the late Robert Denison, the, that gains are to be said only when there is a threat to "public or officer safety." Mean time, a B.C. jury stopped Canada Revenue officials and search police for a 2009 raid on the home of the Neumans, a senior document he'd finally given the taxpayer his records earlier—for an investigation that didn't even involve him. The CCRA now must pay him \$1.1 million. He'd be well-advised to declare that income.

FACE OF THE WEEK



SO SLEEPY: A drunk Shinzo! Making news, Japan's new prime minister, zones out in front of the press at the G7 meeting in Rome.

Cue the violins

Forgo us for cheering athletes for one of life's feasting annoyances. The Muslim empire has sought bankruptcy protection in the U.S. One imagines the hearing, thrall judge. "How's the divorce music business?" Muslim executive "Going down." And then there's Chickenshit, but with two Canadian dual-action lawsuits and a tongue-lashing from Bruce Springsteen. One can sense at the broker's ugly pile of nachos. The other alleges it sculps insects through a water website. The boss says that's wrong. Good enough for us.

Time to get tough

Criminal gangs dominated the news last week. There's been a year's daily string of stories about drug and murder in B.C.'s Lower Mainland, several of them Wild West-style in city centres. Public concern finally spanned B.C. The new Gordon Campbell to say he'll divert some police and Crown prosecutors to crack gang matters, and ask Ottawa to make it harder for violent criminals to go public. Meanwhile police in Quebec and Ontario arrested 47

Gives the melting ice cap and the massive oil and gas reserves suddenly up for grabs, Canada can no longer afford to put off spending on Arctic sovereignty. An access article in the *Journal of Energy & Security* notes, "Recent new governments have failed to tackle Arctic disputes and that needs to change. Otherwise, it will be private energy corporations' international agreements that determine our sovereignty."

Ceding control

The Pakistani government is ceding it a trace, but it looks more like a surrender. An agreement with the Taliban to end hostilities in the Swat valley, and put the region under sharia law, fuels Muslim fundamentalism a sanctuary 160 km from the country's capital. Worse, the government has turned its back on U.S. embassies and who oversteering road for the leader Asim. National Party in elections a year ago, abandoning them to red stars who have waged a campaign of terror and killings. The U.S. says in Afghanistan a strategy to look like it might be too late, too late to turn the tide.

I see dead people

A week of frightening and ill-advised corrections in the entertainment world. London's Covent Garden is staging an open based on the life and death of Anna Nicole Smith, promising to devote the Playmate-queen's body to a nude sex show. The *Daughters of Ireland* is so bad that even *Yo Tu Vas a Die* is as shocking as the trailers. Some things are best left buried and forgotten. ■

The true north

Rather more open hearing up efforts to take us down to the Arctic, with plans to modernize its already large tech base. But and send some researchers to the region. The move may raise tensions among north in nations, all of which are making to map their own Arctic boundaries.



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'You have to have the talent, no matter what. Me and you are not going to hit 500 home runs because we take steroids.'

BASEBALL'S MOST PROLIFIC DRUG DEALER, KIRK RADOMSKI, SPEAKS TO MICHAEL FRISCOLANTI ABOUT ANABOLICS, ABSOLUTION AND A-ROD

A former hot boy for the New York Mets, Kirk Radomski—aka a “Marlboro”—became the sport’s go-to guy for steroids, known growth hormone and other performance-enhancing substances by the time federal agents bustled on his door in 2005. He had clients on every major league team. Now a convicted felon, his testimony was the cornerstone of Ken George Radomski’s groundbreaking investigation into baseball’s “Steroids Era.” Radomski’s own book, *Bases Loaded*, is anything but an apology.

On the field, they wanted to test quickly, and with growth hormone, you could cut your recovery time in half. *Q: Of the drugs were used to fuel pitchers as opposed to hitting 70 home runs?*
At York: Barry Bonds took it to the next level. What I heard from players and what I’ve read, he did both. He took steroids and growth hormone in order to build muscle. If you look at pictures of him, he put 90 lb. on, say. He wanted to hit more home runs. He was a Hall of Famer before that, but he wanted to be immortal. And most of the players I dealt with, they weren’t like that. They wanted to stay on the field and get healthy.

Q: So you didn’t provide what he wanted?
At York: definitely.
Q: Where is the line? Where is taking your own cheating, and where is not cheating?
At York: It becomes cheating when you don’t need to use them and you’re using them, and you use them to give even more. I think that’s a line. You know, when your body is 220, 230 lb., and all of a sudden now you want to be 250 lb. and hit 100 home runs, I think that’s pushing the envelope. The guys that I dealt with, some of them were superstars but basically they were using it for recovery and longevity. They wanted to be out there, they wanted to play at their 100 per cent. With Bonds, who’s an exception, he was out there trying to play at 100 per cent. His whole body got changed. He looked more like a guy who was getting ready for a bodybuilding show than a guy

getting ready to take the field.
Q: Roger Clemens accused of using known growth hormone is proving his career. Do you think that was cheating?
At York: I wouldn’t. He’s a great pitcher to begin with. His numbers are solid, but as he goes with steroids, he wasn’t recognizing. He wasn’t playing at his 100 per cent. If all you’re here to play at 100 per cent, if they’re not, then numbers are going to suffer. The growth hormone isn’t as exciting, too better, it’s not making him recognize he can play at his 100 per cent.

Q: There is certainly, as you call it, a “barry line” between legal and illegal. Steroids are banned, for example, but not cocaine. Athletes are allowed to take cocaine down as often as they want, per AGH is outlawed. Why are some substances permitted and others aren’t?

At York: I would say the powers that be, the doctors, the government. From day one, they say steroids are bad, but we still you could buy a pack of cigarettes that help so many people every day. Why is that legal? They put out like Vice on the market that was hurting people left and right. How long did it take them to get to the market? Certainly they are dangerous. Every now you have somebody using a cocaine that, what happens at the end of the season? They always have surgery. It only makes the burning and hurts the inflammation down. That causes steroids. So in other words, baseball players are ruining their bodies—and baseball is helping them.

Q: Someone is always saying that the “Steroids Era” was a stain on the integrity of the game, that it diminished all their records because guys were pumping themselves full of steroids. Is that a fair argument?

At York: No, it’s not. I don’t want to hear about the numbers. What about Babe Ruth? Did he play against the best in the game? No. He only played against worse people. He never played against the Negro leagues, so why aren’t his numbers raised?

Q: Every team did play against the best, but he was filling himself full of steroids.

At York: He still got hit the ball. Like I said, we and you, I’m still going you with steroids all day long—doesn’t mean you’re going to hit 500 home runs. Some of the players I helped never made it to the major leagues. They were able to play at their 100 per cent, but that 100 per cent wasn’t good enough to make it.

Q: What about Alex Rodriguez? The high end paid player in the game has now admitted that he, too, was on steroids for three years. Do you think that was cheating?

At York: He was cheating if everyone else was doing it. Look at all the guys that were named in Ken Mitchell’s report. They were all taking growth hormone, steroids—and some of these guys didn’t have half of Rodriguez’s numbers. So it all comes back to the fact that you have to have the talent, no matter what you’re doing. Like I said, me and you are not going to hit 500 home runs because we take growth hormone and steroids.

Q: On your third face agree with that legal? Do most athletes use steroids or Mark McGwire or A-Rod got into the Hall of Fame?

At York: Most people don’t care. They just want to enjoy the game. And you know what’s going to happen if the numbers start to drop, are you going to say, hey, five, six, we inserted dollars to say a 1.5 game, one a 1.6 game. Are you going to sit in the box and say \$10 for a hot dog and \$15 for a beer? Guys that are valued now—McGwire and Sammy Sosa, for instance—they should be sending psychos to these guys every week. McGwire and Sosa brought baseball back. That one was cheap, everyone jumped on that bandwagon. Baseball has never been that bad, and it’s not because people wanted to sit 1.6 games.

Q: When is the time for the “Steroids Era” to end? You look at people, it’s everyone—every day—everywhere.
At York: Well, because you know what? Baseball was in a bad way after the last lock out [1994] and things were going downhill. But then ball players started hitting home runs, bringing the fans back. Everyone knew

[about the steroids], and it’s coming out now. Even A-Rod’s saying about how it was “loosey goosey.” He’s not lying. No one thought of it as being illegal because there were so many people doing it, no one cared. And the media that is aware something was going on, they turned a blind eye because if they wrote an article, guess what? No one’s going to talk to these guys. Baseball is a tight-knit society. In five years, 10 years from now, when guys are out of the game, my book is going to look like the Bible because everything I said in there is true.

Q: Can anyone involved in the game, from the owners to coaches, honestly say they didn’t know what was going on?

At York: No, anyone who says that is literally stupid or just doesn’t want to admit the truth.

Q: You portray yourself as essentially the friendly neighborhood drug dealer, the guy who just wanted to make sure that all the players were using the steroids properly and didn’t hurt themselves. Why should readers believe that you’re the good guy in all this?

At York: I was never about the money. I was a friend helping a friend. I had something that most people didn’t have, a good knowledge of the game of baseball, I was these guys’ dad, and what they needed to do to help them, to play at their 100 per cent. I never, ever called anyone. I never indicated that. These guys would call me, and if they called me I talked to them. If they didn’t ask me about drugs, I didn’t bring up drugs.

Q: Did you ever sit down and try to figure out how much money you did make over the years selling steroids and HGH?

At York: Nah, because that’s not what I did. *Q: Was it a break even operation?*
At York: Yeah, what? After it’s said and done, I lost a lot of money. I lost a lot of money!

Q: There’s a very odd anecdote in your book about the time you wrote about the so-called “Radomski Team”—the top 25 highest paid stars in the game. Combined, they made more than \$150 million a season. Does it not bother you at all that these guys were making so much money because of your drugs, and you were getting to hold in return?

At York: I know what I never thought about it because these guys would call me but like a friend would call you. It wasn’t a business, so I didn’t think about it a 24/7. It’s not as anything I lived off of the time.

Q: A lot of people will say you’re on the stand and accuse. “Well, here’s Radomski telling us that he made a big mistake and he wishes he didn’t take the integrity of the game.” That doesn’t make you guys any better, it.

At York: I would have liked friends to not rat what I was, even if I helped them with it or not something. These guys were going to do the drugs with or without me. I helped

and made it safe for these guys, and educated them. If it wasn’t for me, who knows what would have happened?

Q: Ken Mitchell asked in drug problem?
At York: Yes. The only way you solve a problem is saying that’s a problem. They still have never come out and said they had a problem in baseball, so how do you fix a problem if you still haven’t admitted there is one?

Q: You wrote a book to get your side of the story out. What’s your message?

At York: The message is that this wasn’t what the press portrayed it as: that it was a few guys and that no one knew what was going on, and that it was a secret. Everyone knew what was going on, I was just the guy caught in the middle. I would never have written the book if it wasn’t for Ken Mitchell releasing



‘They say steroids are bad, but we could buy a pack of cigarettes that kill so many. Why is that legal?’

these names, and people would never know they would know I sold steroids but they would have never known the depth that I was involved in it, they would have had no idea. I went ahead and explained myself because once the Mitchell report came out my name was everywhere. It became so high. *Q: Are you supplying steroids or HGH to any baseball players these days?*
At York: I get tested. I’m on probation. I don’t even want to leave what it is. I don’t want to see them, I don’t want to know nothing about it. ■



QUEBEC GETS THE FRENCH KISS-OFF

Sarkozy's indifference is just the latest sign of sovereignty's wane



PAUL WELLS

But not the latest sign of the 'sovereignty' wane.

On Monday, Pierre Poindexter, the House leader of the Bloc Québécois, reacted to the latest French President Nicolas Sarkozy wrote a week earlier, in response to a letter written on Feb. 4 by Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe and Parti Québécois Leader Pauline Marois, taking issue with remarks Sarkozy made on Feb. 2 when he declared Jean Charest, Quebec's premier, is a traitor to the *Légion d'honneur*.

Already you can feel the heartbeat of history. Sarkozy you are wondering what the House leader said about the letter in reply to the letter in response to the remarks. Because that is the thing history is made of, no? Yes? No?

Not to say that the claim of sovereignty is, as so properly defined, a fantasy.

In giving Charest his medal, Sarkozy had said, on the general subject of Quebec separatism, "Do you believe the world, as it does in an unprecedented crisis, needs more division?" He said Quebecers are France's "brothers" and Canadians are "friends." And all of them—France, brothers, friends—stand opposed to "separatism, division, divided-mindedness." "Just to prove that you love somebody that you're required to hate their neighbor!" he said. "If your idea is wrong, you don't need to be an umbrella. This doesn't need to be aggressive."

Well, he might as well have hit a brick bomb. "What are you talking about, Mr. President?" asked Marois, who is a prominent opposition leader, and Duceppe, who isn't even that important, in a letter two days later. "We didn't think General de Gaulle was going to reward divided-mindedness when he said, in July 1965, 'Vive le Québec libre.'" They complained about his "lack of respect" and his "intemperate epithets." They warned him that it is "not impossible" that Quebecers vote yes to sovereignty or separatist partnership or whatever while he is still premier of France, i.e., sometime before 2017 at the outside. It was a very long letter. And it "accused all of my institutions," Sarkozy claimed in his reply 12 days later, thus raising a startling question: Is anything, anywhere so trivial as to anger to escape Nicolas

BERGER awarded the *Légion d'honneur* to Charest, Sarkozy spoke against 'division'?

Sarkozy's attention? But most of Marois's and Duceppe's arguments didn't go direct as far from him, instead he smiled, generally, that he wants to "despise in every domain the unique relation that links France to Quebec." And that the best way to do this is "in harmony with the relation that France maintains with all of Canada." In other words, he doesn't believe the world needs more divisions. Which is kind of where this whole thing started.

Yet even though Sarkozy didn't back off as much, Marois and Duceppe decided they'd found a common ground: *pro-unity, pro-peace*. They said to be the last of a thing, not in the idea and whereas an improving balance of probably early last, we left to her destiny. It's just great when everyone can work together, but sometimes Quebec and the rest of Canada disagree, he told reporters. The Bloc is "persecuted" that Sarkozy "will be sensitive to this reality," Duceppe concluded, largely.

This is what the struggle for Quebec's independence has come to, in long history. Two champions: Marois, who lost the Parti Québécois leadership race in 1995 and 2005, and Duceppe, who spent the weekend as a candidate for the same job in 2007 before losing the Marois juggernaut. One antagonist: the president of almost the only foreign country that has ever been persuaded to confer even a passing mention in Quebec's national flag. It is a how good the separatist movement is at winning high-fives, per se, but it's hard to avoid them for awhile.

So it must have come to some relief when the National Progressive Conservative on Wednesday that it will stand in re-orientation of the 1976 Bill of the Plenary of Abolition that was scheduled for later this year. Apparently there was some danger the French side might lose. And in January, the commission leader, blamed the conclusion on the fact the weekend's meeting planning to relocate the headquarters had been subject to "excessive language and threats." And indeed, there had been some of those. Prime Minister, the filmmaker, and "some people will get their nose locked" if it went ahead. A fringe group called the Quebec Resistance Network had threatened that senators "it isn't they won't soon forget."

That's all, nothing serious, unbecome or aggressive, much you.

Comments in English Canada are often warned not to announce the death of the separatist movement, and I won't tempt fate by doing so here. But like Monty Python's separatists, it does seem to be rapping. Separatists distract themselves by getting horribly caught up about side issues: the appointment of a famously flighty French president, the dis-

appointing outcome of a 250-year-old ship made between two foreign armies—because the central issue remains what else is so serious as something that must be (a) denied by Quebecers and (b) negotiated with the rest of Canada, than it remains out of reach.

The state of affairs is starting to settle in. Not only is the separatist movement in bad shape, but it's been in bad shape for most of Canada now Sarkozy's remarks, for instance, were bringing in their fearless but hardly new François Mitterrand could barely control his temper with Quebec separatists. In one of his last public speeches, he said "nationalism is war." He was speaking of the European variety, and from long experience that one: though they have been trying for decades the separatists have been unable to persuade outsiders that there is a uniquely smelly-frog nationalism.

If separatists are upset that they never lost Mitterrand, it is far more telling to them as reality they had Jacques Chirac and his loss in 1995, before he became France's president, Chirac told CNN's Larry King that in the event of a yes vote, France would "recognize the fact." Confronted, said, that is a nearly meaningless phrase, but Quebecers were not going to view it as an expression of at least casual sympathy for the secessionist cause. And then Chirac had friend Jean-Pierre who worked for him. Chirac had been mayor of Quebec City when Chirac was mayor of Paris. Now, as Jean Chirac's chief of staff, Fillion joined the tense relationship between the Canadian prime minister and the French president, to the point where Chirac had to step on his last of official duty as prime minister in Paris. Relations between the two countries "have never been better," Chirac said, "before" he called Canada "an invasion to have for the future."

Through all these years, Louise Brodeur was the Parti Québécois's chief envoy in charge of talking up their party's cause among the politicians. And what's more, when Chirac visited last month and Quebec's National Assembly made a resolution to name the premier of the Quebec capital's great former mayor, Brodeur led the cheer. In the battle for the election of official France, he had better been a fool. She should not feel too bad, but simply had the case to make. Article 1 of France's constitution, after all, calls that country "a republic, one and indivisible."

Alan Dubeau, the recent La Presse columnist, summed up all this history last week. Though, Mitterrand, Chirac and Sarkozy represent almost 30 years of "intended indifference" among France's leaders with regard to Quebec's constitutional issues, Dubeau wrote. "That's putting it to a lot of people."



FRANCE'S CONSTITUTION SAYS IT IS 'A REPUBLIC, ONE AND INDIVISIBLE.' SEPARATISTS SHOULD GET THE HINT.



MARCOIS and Duceppe increasingly seem to be distancing themselves with the issue.

And France's attitude would barely have mattered in the first place. In a secession attempt, the separatists would take in contrast from precisely one world capital. Ottawa, if the federal government agrees to negotiate the terms of secession and the outcome of those negotiations is successfully ratified according to Canada's Constitution, no for sign government will be able to recognize Quebec. In the absence of those conditions, Quebec would have to remain a province.

The 1995 Clarity Act, which requires a "clear answer" to a "clear question" and gives Parliament the mandate to decide whether those two conditions have been met. So basically, the role of French presidents

was simply to make Quebec separatists feel better about being stuck in a constitutional policy with the rest of us, and for three decades they haven't even bothered to do that much. It is reassuring to see that the worst enemy movement can't get better service in Paris than I did when I lived there.

As for the Clarity Act, Stephen Harper has never said a word against it, nor Michael Ignatieff, nor even most Quebecers. A year after it passed into law, Lucien Bouchard, the lion of the 1995 Quebec referendum, quit politics. On the day he resigned, he complained that Quebecers had proved "astonishingly impulsive in the face of federal offers for the provincial arena, the Millennium Scholarship program, deceleration of university [university] tuition, and the adoption of [the Clarity Act]."

There were the actual offers as against Canada that Bouchard was able to return on the day he gave up. The federal government had spent six billions on social programs, education and research, and demanded of Quebecers that they ask nicely before leaving. A decade later his successors no longer even bother to look for more concessions from anybody who lives here in the present day. Instead they try to pick fights with vested interests and foreign politicians. It is a miserable way to make a living. What happens in a dream to destroy? Sometimes after a while, it seems to look like a silly dream. ■



OBAMA VISIT WISH LIST: ENDORSING FREE TRADE

"It would be marvelous if there were a point declaration by both Obama and Harper saying they mutually must protect themselves. It's not only good for Canada and the U.S., it would be a signal to the world that the two countries are not being heavily independent on trade. I feel strongly on this."—Thomas d'Aquila, head of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, on what he would like to see coming out of Obama's Ottawa visit this week.



LOOK WHO'S BACK IN THE PARTY

Wajnsman returns to the Liberals after being 'banned for life'

BY MARTIN PATRICKOWITZ • Beryl Wajnsman is many things to many people: well-consulted gadfly, perpetually angry newspaper columnist, silver-tongued orator with a weak aura for Robert Kennedy quotations. To the Liberal Party of Canada, he was personal nemesis, one of 50 people "banned for life" by former prime minister Paul Martin for being linked to the sponsorship scandal. In many ways strange, then, that Wajnsman is once again in the party, as an organizer charged with bringing a variety of social groups and somewhat moderate Liberal MPs. He has even co-ordinated on policy issues and spearheading for Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff.

"He's an influential guy, and has been very helpful in re-connecting some of those oldies, within the Montreal Jewish community but also with labour and community leaders," said a senior Ignatieff strategist for Quebec. "He is one of many organizers and operatives who are aware that Michael has successfully moved back and is helping get it back together."

Wajnsman's return as a party organizer came to an abrupt end in 2005, following the testimony of the disgraced president of Adfem Groupwajnsman, Jean Tardif, at the

HE'S BEEN "very helpful" in re-connecting old ties, says an Ignatieff Quebec strategist

Generey commission. Wajnsman, 68, was present at a lunch where he left an envelope stuffed with \$5,000 in cash for Liberal fundraiser Joe Menello.

Wajnsman vigorously denied any involvement, and was never charged with anything. Nevertheless, then Liberal Quebec lieutenant Jean Lapierre, at Martin's behest, removed Wajnsman, along with nine others, from the party. What this usually means, however, is a matter of debate—particularly since Wajnsman wasn't (and isn't) a member of the Liberal party. Until December 2005, when it was amended, the party's constitution didn't even allow for such bans.

Liberal spokesperson Don Lauzon said he couldn't comment on the views of the former members, including Menello and former public works minister Alfonso Gagliano. "It was political backstabbing," Wajnsman says now. "I was tagged because I opposed Martin and Lapierre, or because I made fun of the Generey commission, or because I defended Joe Menello to death." "Like your pick."

The party's Quebec wing, which suffered the most fallout from the sponsorship scandal, centers. The Liberals were badly beaten in Quebec in the last election in part because of the continued enflaming between the estranged Charest and Martin camps. "I think I was the only one who wasn't speaking to the press," says board member Illegals Gagnon of the many embarrassing holes during and after Stéphane D'Amboise's campaign.

All things considered, Ignatieff is off to a good start in the province. He has polled well and is popular among to Liberal MPs, thanks largely to his 2006 election recognizing Quebec as a nation. Yet his supporters concede the party is still divided. "It's fragile, and it's still a work in progress," said the senior Ignatieff staffer, of the uneasy truce between the Charest and Martin camps. Bringing back people like Wajnsman revives the pain.

Wajnsman, whose world view traces from the capital to the twilight twilight zone, is positively effusive about Ignatieff. Calling him "the most independent Liberal leader under 18 years," Wajnsman believes Ignatieff "can rescue the Liberal party toward 11th hour, but not to embrace and bring a new national vision for the country."

But he still bumps up against old ghosts. Lapierre himself was at Menello's city hall in January while Wajnsman was accepting the Martin-Lapierre King-Lespy Award for community service work. Wajnsman saw him, cursed and proceeded with his acceptance speech. Lapierre sat and listened, clapped politely and quickly left the room before the applause was over. ■

DETROIT NORTH

Crime, homelessness, guns: Surrey has it all. Its unlikely saviour: A Buddhist conservative.

BY NANCY MACDONALD • A year ago, in a Red Stargate gang bar, six men were found murdered in a B.C. residence that doubled as a drug den. Two were innocent victims; collateral damage in a war for guns, money and allegiance. It was the worst gangland massacre in the province's history, but it didn't happen in Vancouver. Dubbed the "Surrey slayings," the grisly, sex-fueled murder was precisely the kind of big-city problem the sprawling, postwar suburb of Surrey was created to escape—and is battling more and more these days.

Once, Surrey was a sleepy state of annexed and cul-de-sacs lined by standard-issue ranch homes and split levels. Nowhere. Homelessness and violent crime are growing problems. Earlier this month, the suburbs, noted "Asian their capital of the English speaking world" in 2001, recorded three murders within a single week. In transportation hub, Surrey Central, was recently named B.C.'s "most at-risk transit station," parked 24 hours a day by gun-toting police officers, it boasts the system's highest crime incident rate. But even here in its own version of the Downtown Canada Whaling, former farmland, crash, no work and the constant threat of violence. Indeed, when, last year, Surrey didn't rank on the Marlon's "Canada's 10 most dangerous cities" list, a Vancouver paper ran a story noting its surprising absence from the roll.

The growing problems in Surrey in Surrey's wider North American trend while falling crime rates in cities like New York and L.A. are seen in success stories of the past 15 years, experts say we're pricing our suburbs to become tomorrow's ghettos by shipping our social issues to the fringes. In Canada, nowhere is this more visible than greater Vancouver, where a condo boom, over-inflated and estate market has closed the door to all but a "truly elite market," says Elise Wily, who chairs the University of British Columbia's urban studies program. The result: It scares them close Surrey.



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ROGERS

The Vancouver bedroom community once mostly boasts one of Canada's most explosive growth rates. Its population—which increases by 1,000 every month—is predicted to surpass Vancouver's within 15 to 20 years. But a low half an hour police officers. The low pay in civilian roles isn't the only problem. Keeping policing more difficult in the suburbs not only do Surrey's police cover an area three times the size of Vancouver, doing duties left out of hand in, drab, crowded backyards, not exposed street corners. It's a common issue: In suburban North Mississauga, police have asked that bushes be cut down so suspects can't duck behind them.) Many of those moving into Surrey are poor single parents, new immigrants or Aboriginal, says a recent report by a community organization, *Where Surrey*. (Nearly 40 per cent of Surrey's residents are foreign-born, compared with a national average of 20 per cent.) Already, close to 30 per cent live in poverty, says. But the city lacks Vancouver's social services net, and its public transit.

The task of solving this growing tangle of problems has fallen to an unlikely candidate: Duane Watts, a conservative *Boulder* from

the City of Surrey at Simon Fraser University.

Watts is starting with a massive revitalization of the downtown core, constructed in Surrey's central wards and all. She is encouraging developers to throw up four million square feet of office space in high-rise towers. The anchor is a new SFU satellite campus. Completed last year, another thing: There's a stunning development program: an office tower, a vacant microbrewery and the new university buildings, which, last year, added 4,000 students to the city core. To that, Watts is hoping to add 2,000 city staff by relocating Surrey City Hall from "the middle of nowhere."

All of which was a tall order even before the financial disaster struck. Since



SURREY ILLUSTRATES A TREND: FALLING CRIME RATES DOWNTOWN, BUT SUBURBS THAT ARE BECOMING GHETTOS OF POVERTY AND DRUGS

Best Vancouver, he referred to a second term as Surrey's mayor in November. In her first year on the job, Watts added 119 RCMP officers. Riding high on public popularity, she implemented a new crime reduction strategy, targeting criminals with drug or sexual assault victims: a "junkie trap" in Surrey, which had previously blocked the entrance of even emergency shelters, into a new building. Darryl Pilon. She is also tackling new-wave level homelessness and warning Surrey off of its addiction to strip commercial developments and into per cent tax increases.

But how to grow a real city from a suburb that has become a bedroom development? For decades, Surrey drew out the welcome mat for new industrial parks and cheap subdivision housing. Crowding density there will now actively discourage builders in low-density areas like Guildford by increasing costs there, says Gordon Price, director of

then, two massive housing developments—led by the state redevelopment—were on hold after the developer fled for bankruptcy protection. A third, Quattro, Surrey's largest mixed-use development, burned as the ground in a suspicious fire in October 2007. (Watts just the developer off the ground, another question remains: will it work?) After all, planners were once not marginal in central Winnipeg and Scarborough would open revitalization of their cores. (At Winnipeg's Portage Place Mall, a magnet for gang activity, security guards wear body armour.)

Watts has a policy, if passed, style. If it's worked, it doesn't show. She passed her mandate as a young age. Married at 16, she was hospitalized at 20, she endured months of physical abuse from her then husband. (She left him soon after.) Eighteen years ago, she married Surrey businessman Brian Watts,

his last three years, he voted in favour of all but four—the run for mayor as an independent. She had a son, then a daughter. But the bond a little crumbled at her first meeting, they voted to deny her the mayor's seat on the Greater Vancouver Regional District board—which she calls a strange school to her authority. (It was removed following a storm of public anger.) Today, in councilors are part of the council party she created, Surrey First, all but one are women.

"Development is my cry," says Watts, whose office features a giant picture of the female Buddha (there is such a thing), was "creating new quality of life." She's opening a new suburban, she talks the way Vancouver politicians have for 30 years of demolition and light rail, extension from city development. "We raised the bar on development. No more strip malls. No more sprawl." In Surrey, that's like screaming Revolution! ■

AS MAYOR of the world's one-time "sunbelt" capital, Watts is building a city from the suburbs up.

with whom she had two daughters. She came forward in 1995. In 2005, led by mayor Doug McColl, she stepped in planning of two development projects that were before council in

PHOTO: JAMES J. JOHNSON/STAFF PHOTO

MACLEANS JULY 2009

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Is this the quiet end to pay equity?



TORIES want to kill the principle that equity is a right, critics say

BY AARON WEINSTEIN • While the Government's proposed Pay Equity Act, introduced in December, the Harper government's controversial, and nearly final, full economic update was effectively dispatched to the history of history that while the government has moved its position and shifted its plans to eliminate pay-equity subsidies for political parties, it has not dropped one of the upstate's most controversial provisions—a legislative change to the rules governing pay equity.

The Public Service Employees' Union (PSEU) and the Public Service Labour Relations Board (PSLRB) have been at the forefront of the public service debate with through collective bargaining between union and employer. Complaints would no longer be the business of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, but would instead be referred to the Public Service Labour Relations Board. The Conservatives say this will lead to a more equitable pay system. Critics argue the new legislation will effectively get the right to equality on the workplace.

The Canadian Human Rights Act, for instance, states that the value of work is assessed on skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. To those critics, the new legislation would not consider "qualifications and market forces."

"The purpose of pay equity was to, in fact, intervene in order to reduce what the forces of the market had done to women's pay," explains human rights lawyer Mary Connolly. "It's a market right, a law professor at the University of British Columbia. "There's a wide consensus that pay equity is a human right. This new legislative effectively treats pay equity as if it's not a human right."

Internally, both Irving and Connolly opposed the legislation, which has been presented as an attempt to cut down on lengthy litigation, to eventually be challenged in court. ■

The little country that cried wolf

BY NICHOLAS KÖHLER • Wolf bounties have been something of a crime reform last year when it came out that, as Alaska governor, Republican VP candidate Alaska Palin had offered bounties to \$10 per kill. Alaska's attorney Ashley Judd kept the case alive into the new year, releasing a video calling upon Palin to "stop this criminal strategy."

Judd's attack triggered what the press pointed out as a "cat fight," the kind of catfighting that can ensue in court. In fact, wolves and people are increasingly encroaching upon each other's territories, and the implications for both sides are serious. This winter, a pack in British Columbia, not far from Labrador, has been causing concern, with one woman recently describing how wolves descended on her Siberian huskies.

Such close encounters elsewhere in Canada have made provinces like British Columbia, "the wolf country," a hot topic, says Neil Hardy, the owner of Hudson Bay, Sask., a farming community 100 km east of Saskatoon. Hardy has just received a year-old scheme giving hunters \$100 per wolf kill. Canada's town has to pay for and on 100 animals. Local packs, Hardy says, have followed their prey—deer, elk and moose—into the farmlands, where they now dine on cattle and other tender morsels.

Other jurisdictions have sought similar



TOWNS are putting bounties on wolves that menace livestock

measures. Alberta last year backed away from a plan to kill wolf pups and cull their parents. This month, Idaho Republican Senator Gary Schroeder signed a wolf bill on the bill of a controversial measure, an indication of just how badly he wants wolf to be treated as an endangered species. But Saskatchewan's wolf expert Paul Paquet is suspicious of whether bounties work. He's suspicious of the tales of dog attacking wolves too. "Many of them quote other people, then they get exaggerated. I'm sure that's where the story about the little boy who cried wolf comes from." ■

More trouble for banks: fake cheques

BY PAGES MEMBERSHIP • Justice G. R. Straty put it, the experience of a Toronto business owner whose bookkeeper provided him out of nearly \$400,000 "in an all too familiar story." In this case, office manager Ronald Kruse filed his boss's signature on 478 cheques from 2005 to 2006 to fuel his gambling habit.

Currently, the bank's owner's only recourse was to go after Kruse for the money. But that could save change. In February, the Ontario judge gave the green light to a lawsuit against the bank that caused the cheques, which, says the victim's lawyer, "could have wide implications" for financial institutions across the country.

Since the 1970s, the new banknotes that were a check "know as could reasonably be found with knowledge of the forgery" can't be held responsible for depositing a bogus cheque. As such, when the owner of Dupont Heating & Air Conditioning discovered he had been defrauded, he said Kruse—and was, according to lawyer Igna Nemark, the judgment in "not worth the paper it's written on," Kruse doesn't see the \$100,000 he was ordered to pay. So they tried another approach. As part of tough anti-fraud legislation, passed in 2000 to stiffen out money-laundering and terrorism, banks are obligated to monitor account activity and to detect signs of account mismanagement. In this case, Kruse was wrong up to 18 different AML mistakes per month to deposit the forged cheques into his bank of Nova Scotia account, then those mistakes withdrawing the same amount. Says Nemark, "The bank should have caught on to that."

According to Nemark, that the lawsuit has been allowed to go to trial is "prevalent in itself," in itself, and suggests that banks could be held accountable to a third party. Martin Seligman, who is representing the Bank of Nova Scotia, says despite the recent damage, he remains confident that the law will do what his clients of all banks "can't possibly cover an obligation to a stranger." He may be right. But in the meantime, this case is one activity banks will be monitoring closely. ■



BANKS could be on the hook for laundering forged cheques

CAPITAL DIARY

WHY SELECT AUCTIONS MAKE IGNAZZI NERVOUS

Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff was hoarse after the day of the Winter Palace Ball in Toronto's Raffles Hotel, which he and his wife, Catherine, attended. The evening was called "Dancing with the Stars" by the media. Ignatieff's wife, who is a former member of the House of Commons, was hoarse after the evening. Ignatieff's wife, who is a former member of the House of Commons, was hoarse after the evening. Ignatieff's wife, who is a former member of the House of Commons, was hoarse after the evening.

On the dance floor was a glass case (owned by Nephthys Productions, one of the half-siblings) with a screen that had been given by Queen Elizabeth II and King George VI. The screen was a gift to the Queen Elizabeth II and King George VI. The screen was a gift to the Queen Elizabeth II and King George VI. The screen was a gift to the Queen Elizabeth II and King George VI.

JOHN BAIRD LOVES OLIVIA

Governor General Michael Ignatieff held a special ceremony on the grounds of Rideau Hall to mark the Olympic torch for the 2008 Vancouver Summer Olympics, including a Grade 5 class from Lady Patricia Public School in Ottawa. Ignatieff's wife, Catherine, was hoarse after the evening. Ignatieff's wife, who is a former member of the House of Commons, was hoarse after the evening. Ignatieff's wife, who is a former member of the House of Commons, was hoarse after the evening.

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON MARTIN'S EXIT TAPES AND THE GG'S (SHE STARTED IT!) SNOWBALL FIGHT



MICHAEL, JEAN entertains schoolchildren at Rideau Hall (top), Paul Martin (middle left), John Baird with kids from Lady Patricia Public School (middle right) and Michael Ignatieff at the Ottawa Evening at the Winter Palace, Ontario's Governor General's Residence (bottom)

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WE ALMOST HAD A CANNIBAL FLAJOUT

Hortense's Minister Jean Moreau presided over a special Flag Day celebration on Speaker Paul Martin's 10th birthday. A training collection that includes all of Canada's historical flags (including one that was the flag of the French before Canada was a country) was created by Immigration Minister Jean Charest when he was in a prior position. Secretary of the Speaker's reception room was where the parliamentary committee was to discuss the new flag that resulted in the current Maple Leaf, which first flew on Feb. 18, 1965. A Taryn McDermott with a snake tattooed on her forearm for the new Canadian flag on display displayed a gross leaf that, in his opinion, looked like a terrible leaf. ■

Governor General Michael Ignatieff held a special ceremony on the grounds of Rideau Hall to mark the Olympic torch for the 2008 Vancouver Summer Olympics, including a Grade 5 class from Lady Patricia Public School in Ottawa. Ignatieff's wife, Catherine, was hoarse after the evening. Ignatieff's wife, who is a former member of the House of Commons, was hoarse after the evening. Ignatieff's wife, who is a former member of the House of Commons, was hoarse after the evening.

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RET CHRISTIAN CAN'T WAIT

Former prime minister Paul Martin spoke at the University of

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ISRAEL'S BIG STICK

The Gaza war has been a return to the bedrock policy of hitting enemies hard

BY MICHAEL PETROU • An Israeli soldier's profile, scribbled on the wall of a ramshackle home in Gaza during the recent war, best explains the shift that has occurred regarding Israel's strategy toward its Palestinian neighbours. "Next time it will hurt more."

Israel began its campaign in Gaza with measurable success, gaining control of Gaza, which controls the majority of its military and security forces, and Egypt to its south. In the weeks, and seeing Hamas's success in the Gaza Strip, Israel's strategy was to use its military to force Hamas to accept a ceasefire. But when Hamas refused to accept a ceasefire, Israel's strategy was to use its military to force Hamas to accept a ceasefire. But when Hamas refused to accept a ceasefire, Israel's strategy was to use its military to force Hamas to accept a ceasefire.

But the war, which received widespread support across Israeli political spectrum, wasn't really about changing every tunnel to Egypt or finding and destroying each rocket that might be launched toward Israeli towns. It was about the Israeli soldier's crude message, and a principle that was over the bedrock of Israeli defence strategy—deterrence, or something is threatened and any attack will be met with a punishing response. "We've been on a mission to do military operations in Gaza we're keeping with traditional military doctrine—smothering the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] left it had got away from in the last couple of years—and that was to

respond to any and all threats with overwhelming, brutal force," says Shimon Peres, a senior fellow for Middle East studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "It's about establishing a deterrent. It's about making people think twice before they attack Israel."

Many Israelis felt that this deterrent had been lost following the conclusion of the 1979 Camp David peace talks. "Israel had to do something after the debacle of July and August 2006 to demonstrate that it is still the strong one, that it still has a lot of deterrence, that it can act militarily successfully," says Martin Indyk, director of the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "This was an attempt to do that."

Prior to the Gaza war, pressure had been building steadily on the Israeli government to forcefully respond to the rocket-shooting Hamas was launching against Israeli towns with increasing frequency since the military group's takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007. These rockets killed more than a dozen people and caused widespread damage, especially in Sderot, the closest Israeli town to Gaza, where there are bomb shelters on almost every street corner. In civilian homes in the open during an attack have a safe place to run to. A single six-month truce between Israel and Hamas ended in December 2012 when Hamas fired more than 100 rockets and mortars at Israel during the ceasefire. On Dec 23, Israel launched its attack on Gaza that began the war.

Today, with Israel and Hamas once again engaged toward some sort of a negotiated truce, both sides are claiming victory. Hamas can boast because it remains in power and is still capable of attacking Israel. Going to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert did not dispute this when he took stock of the conflict in late January at a gathering of the World Jewish Congress in Jerusalem. He didn't claim that Hamas had been disarmed and its tunnels shut down. Instead, he said

that Israel had shown that attacking it was costly, that it would hurt too much. "We have re-established in the perception of the whole world the power and deterrence that Israel has always enjoyed," he said. "It is not worthwhile starting a war with Israel."

It is still too early to tell if Hamas—as well as Hezbollah and other militant groups opposed to Israel—agrees with the assessment. At Shimon Peres's speech at the Council on Foreign Relations, it is much more difficult to see an assessment from such as Hamas that a country that it has been a long period of calm, Israel's strategy will gain credibility. If, on the other hand, the months have now southern Israeli towns are once again under steady rocket fire, the perceived value of deterrence as a viable strategy will diminish.

What's clear, though, is that Israelis, and many Israeli politicians, are willing to gamble that Olmert is right. The Gaza rocket strikes revealed in no simple terms wanting a majority of assets in the Israeli parliament.



A TUNNEL IN GAZA (above), the ruins of a Palestinian village in West Bank (below). Caption: People are disarmed.

accelerating a coalition government. The shape this coalition will take was uncertain at the time (Merkel's) were no press. But it is clear there has been an overall shift to the right. The right wing Likud party scored in popularity, finishing second behind Kadima, a centrist party, by only one seat. Yair Lapid, an ultra-nationalist party, took 17 seats to finish third in voting. The ultra-nationalist party took 17 seats and dropped in fourth place.

Kadima, which headed the last government and is now led by Ehud Barak, who served as foreign affairs minister, has been negotiating with the Palestinians. Authority for more than a year, during which time Israel's military action was seen as a major step in the West Bank has been taken in the last couple of years. Kadima has been seen as a major step in the last couple of years. Kadima has been seen as a major step in the last couple of years.



ISRAEL'S HARD LINE HAS HAMPERED PALESTINIANS FAVOURING A NEGOTIATED TWO-STATE SOLUTION



the West Bank or Gaza and advocates Jewish settlements of Palestinian territories. Yair Lapid's Likud party, which is not opposed to a Palestinian state, but is committed to the idea that Israel is a Jewish state—something Israeli Arabs vehemently reject. He says that Israeli Arabs MPs who have met with Hamas should be executed.

"Clearly, Israelis are looking for strong-arm solutions rather than negotiations in this sense," says Olmert. She says that in the absence of a negotiated solution, the only way Israelis feel more secure than they did dur-

ing the second intifada, which ended in 2005 with a truce between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. "There is a lot of frustration on my opinion that if they are decisively concerning the remaining territories, the odds that as a country, they can solve the problem militarily."

Palestinians in the West Bank, which is governed by Hamas, are reacting with cynicism to the Israeli election results. "For the public, any Israeli government is the same," says Walid Badar, a Palestinian journalist in the West Bank of Ramallah. "They haven't changed. They have experienced Likud. And they have experienced Kadima. And the recent war in Gaza has proved—at least from their point of view—that any Israeli government is a government of war, right wing, and there is no hope for any better future."

He adds that some Palestinians will hope new American President Barack Obama will pressure Likud to make concessions, but even those optimists think this won't happen until a second Obama term, given America's economic problems at home.

Palestinian cynicism has been heightened by both the war in Gaza and the recent predictions of George W. Bush. The former American president and a Palestinian state was possible by the end of his time in office, and promised to work toward that goal. Mark Regier, a spokesman for Olmert, rejected the prediction when he met with McClatchy reporter last April. "People were skeptical of that even at the time, and now that deployment has been out and they see, says Robert Belcher, a senior Jerusalem-based analyst at the International Crisis Group. "This got the date and it didn't happen, and on top of that the Israeli people moved further to the right."

The Gaza war, and the re-emergence of the Israeli policy of deterrence, now especially damaging to those Palestinians who favour a negotiated two-state solution, Belcher says. They point out that the same Israeli politicians with whom they are negotiating launched a war in Gaza that killed 1,400 Palestinians. "People are tremendously disillusioned," he says. ■



BRITAIN: GARDEN ON WHEELS BEATS CITY HALL
 A group of gardeners would have threatened the Food for Thought project in Ashford from erecting a greenhouse to extend the community vegetable garden's range of crops. That was until the group put wheels beneath the greenhouse, making it a mobile, thereby circumventing the regulations. They are now considering applying for outdoor water to a potting shed and calling it a shed to avoid the expensive permitting process.

SOMETHING ROTTEN IN BULGARIA

Corruption runs rampant in the EU's newest member state

BY NANCY MACDONALD • When Aleksandar Todorov was named down on his black Marko order in an suburb of Sofia in May 2007, the wealthy Bulgarian businessman became the third president of the soccer club Lokomotiv Plovdiv to be assassinated in as many years. Todorov, who was shot in broad daylight, was also thought to control political interests in southwest Bulgaria. His death came a week ahead of state elections, and four days after a city councillor in the Black Sea resort town of Nessebar was shot and killed with seven bullets—the same number used earlier to kill Todorov. Todorov, the mayor of the central Black Sea resort town of Varna, died.

So went the last election season in Bulgaria, the newest European Union member state, where graft and contract killings are routine and a study group of 500 scientists are studying for their roles of everything from new hospitals to billions in European aid. Brussels had hoped to encourage reform in Bulgaria—in any measure the poorest, most corrupt and violent country in Europe—by drawing the traditionally pro-European state into its orbit. Since it joined the EU in 2007, however, political reforms have gone unmet, the legal system remains a shambles, and corruption, which taints everything from sausage-making to highway construction, has actually increased, according to the Sofia-based Center for the Study of Democracy.

Bulgaria's criminal underworld—which has links to the very highest reaches of power, according to lawyer Dimitar Markov, who heads the Center's anti-corruption mission—has hit its hands as a promised \$12 billion EU aid (it's the "motherload," says Sofia-based consultant Marianna Mencheva, formerly a political adviser in the office of President Peter Stoyanov) not only are generous EU subsidies a "raw resource to steal," but, like elsewhere, most of the state's financial state is now foreign investment has entered Bulgaria, which in recent years had been clock-

ing growth rates of more than 10 percent. Last November, alongside a major reshuffle, Brussels stopped Bulgaria's \$115 million in development assistance, pulled after millions in aid money was embezzled, and no constructive work of a number of high-profile corruption and murder investigations. In one case, prosecutors qualified for EU development aid to buy new fire equipment, passing off corrupt machinery imported from the former East Germany and pocketing the difference: a \$14 million markup. Meanwhile, Bulgaria's State Agency for National Security, created in 2003 to prove to Brussels that the country could "defend" itself against crime, has generated more scandals than victories. In October, it was found to have uncovered the plot of 39 leading Bulgarian nationalists, allegedly to discover the reasons of government leaders, it also gained access to reporters' telephone records.

According to Ivan Krastev, chair of the Center for Liberal Strategies, a Sofia think tank, EU criticism is actually well focused in

GRAFT TAINTS EVERYTHING FROM SAUSAGE-MAKING TO CONSTRUCTION, AND HAS ACTUALLY INCREASED SINCE 2007



WE'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE IT. Bulgarians at an anti-government protest in St. Andrew.

Bulgaria—an indicator of how little faith the public has in its government. It scandalizes people that their country—where salaries average \$210 a month and doleful cars still wander the capital—its using a once-a-month check to academics, he says. More than 71 per cent of Bulgarians were their government to quit, in January, hundreds clashed with police after a 2,000-strong rally against corruption and the slow pace of economic reform turned into a riot—the biggest demonstration in since 1987, when rioters brought down the first socialist government,

says Krasimira Eneva, a senior professor for the leading newspaper Dnevnik. "For the first time in years, the young and the middle classes are taking part," said Eneva. "Before, they'd just emigrate."

In elections this June, Sergei Stanev—the London School of Economics-educated prime minister, dubbed "Mr. Clean," by pressman George W. Bush in 2007—will face a tough challenge from a new center-right party headed by opposition Sofia Mayor Boyko Borisov, who's taking a hard line against corruption. But Bulgarian politicians always do, says Andrew Nathan, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, who has served as an adviser to Russia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. "Corruption is always the main theme, but there's never any substantive improvement."

Meanwhile, the list of victims continues to grow. Last September, the Sofia-based investigative journalist Olgia Stoyanova was leaving a downtown restaurant. He was

attacked by four men in black van, using firearms, broke his elbow and both legs in four places. Six months earlier, Georgi Stoev, 34, author of one book on the Bulgarian mafia, was gunned down at midday at one of Sofia's busiest bus stops. Two weeks ago, the two men suspected of killing Stoev were arrested, only to be released without charges 34 hours later. A conviction would have been a first: since 2000, over 150 gangland killings have gone untraced. Convicts are untouchable in Bulgaria, says Stoev, who still travels with the help of a wheelchair. ■

Iran cracks down harder on the Baha'i

BY MICHAEL PETRAU • Iran says it will soon charge several followers of the Baha'i faith with spying for Israel, according to Iran's IRNA news agency. Deputy Tehran prosecutor Hassan Hashemi-Nia's court says the seven will face a revolutionary court case this week. He did not name those to be tried, but it is almost certain he was referring to seven Baha'i leaders who were arrested last spring.

Overseas Iranian News (Iran's Baha'i faith,



IRAN'S HARD-LINE regime accuses the Baha'i of spying for Israel

Tehran, is among those arrested. He called his mother and sister in soon as news of the trial broke last week. "She's worried. We're all worried," he said in an interview with Mehr News. Baha'is have been despised in the past, but given the charges against him this time, Nasser is particularly concerned. Baha'is have not been allowed to act as lawyers since his arrest, and the charges against him amount to treason. "If they take him to the court, which is usually behind closed doors, without having access to their lawyers, and with all these constraints, you can imagine what's going to happen," Nasser said.

The Baha'i faith is a monotheistic religion whose followers believe that God's most recent messenger was Baha' Ullah, who lived in Persia during the 19th century before dying in exile in Palestine. The Baha'is have suffered harsh persecution in Iran since the Islamic revolution, and especially during the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"It's part of the overall propaganda that the regime, and in particular Ahmadinejad, has been using to whip up hysteria, partially in advance of the elections, but partially because there is a greater fear on the part of hard-line Islamists that they are losing their grip on power," said Przemyslaw Adamczyk, a professor of international law at McGill University. "There's a fear on the part of the government that there is a list of sympathy toward the Baha'is among ordinary Iranians."

Gadhafi: still crazy after all these years

BY SUSAN MOHAMMAD • His reputation was beginning to erode, but critics of Col Muammar Gadhafi's leadership of the Libyan leader is too erratic to bend the African Union, after controversial statements made during his last address to the 15-nation group. Only a week into his appointment, the AU leader said he would lead a mission to the Horn of Africa to help protect a "United States of Africa," which would include Caribbean islands with African populations such as Haiti, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Gadhafi made other controversial statements, for example ordering the actions of Somali pirates as "self defense," and said that multi-party democracies in Africa were led to bloodshed. He went on to say that Libya was the best model for Africa because opposition parties are not allowed.

George Joffe, a University of Cambridge lecturer and Libyan politics expert, said the dictator's vision of a single African military, currency and passport to Africa. "The most serious in Africa—being South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal and, to a lesser extent, Egypt—don't want that to occur," says Joffe. "They don't want their sovereignty rights threatened with some super state structure against them." Besides, Joffe says, Gadhafi's top African views will follow the way he sees his role as head of the AU as an "empty role."

"He can make any public declarations in the West but only if the states agree can he actually create any new institutions," he says.

After years of sanctions and political isolation over Libya's suspected nuclear role, Gadhafi ended back into the international community by his re-emergence, says the 1988 Lecher bombing, paying \$2.7 billion in compensation to the victims.

GADHAFI SAYS democracy is a bad idea for African nations

ties' relations and ending any form of economic aid. And although he claims the China, Italy and Japan have shown interest in investing in Libya, he said that a growing oil industry, which Gadhafi seriously as a replacement of another source. A brief was in Uganda's Daily Monitor summed up the prevailing view: "Gadhafi election is a last nail in Africa's coffin."

Two judges nabbed in a prison scam

BY PHILIPPE OMBIER • A pair of private court judges in Pennsylvania have pleaded guilty to taking kickbacks between 2003 and 2006 in exchange for sending people to privately run detention centers. According to prosecutors, former Lancaster County judges Mark Covarella and Michael Conahan ruled in more than \$1 million for sending young offenders to facilities run by PA Child Care LLC and Western PA Child Care LLC.

Several entities in Pennsylvania have agreements with detention centers in operation in which the companies are paid according to the number of detainees they house.



THE TWO TOOK CASH for sending inmates to detention centres

Conahan is alleged to have played a leading role in shutting down the county's public prison in during the year in 2006 and placing approximately million dollar contracts toward the two companies.

Conavella, meanwhile, kept the detention centers. The former president of Lancaster County Court House had long been the target of critics who said he was unusually harsh in his sentencing. Between 2002 and 2006, Conavella locked up a quarter of those who came before his court, more than double the state-wide average. (In one particularly egregious case, Conavella sentenced a pregnant woman to 18 months in detention for having a MySpace page that posted from her high school's mascot mascot.) Now, the state's Supreme Court is looking into overturning hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of sentences handed down in connection with the fraud.

No one associated with the companies has been charged, though investigators say their request is ongoing. However, the one-time co-owner of PA Child Care, Bob Powell, claims he too was a victim of Conavella and Conahan. "These judges," he says, "were corrupt, greedy, and the Associated Press, 'read it very plain to me. Powell' that he was going to be required to pay certain to us."

The judges' plea deals call for each to serve 18 months in prison. ■



The shocking truth about the value of your home

Economists say not to worry, but new evidence shows that Canadian prices could go down, and stay down, for a decade

BY DUNCAN HOOD



There are still people out there who don't believe Canada is about to be hit by a devastating housing crisis, but Russ Kassar isn't one of them. For him, the crisis has already arrived.

Last July he made an \$80,000 per-sale payment on a 1.5 million-dollar second-floor unit in Vancouver's busy H&H Victoria building, just a few blocks away from where he lives. Kassar, a 42-year-old computer analyst, who's married with no kids, appeared to move in by the end of 2006. But when he put his current apartment on the market, he didn't get a single offer. He thought maybe he had priced it a little high, so he knocked a bit off. Still, no offers. He lowered it again, and again, until eventually he was offering his apartment for a full \$122,000 less than his initial asking price. That's when he realized he was in trouble. "We reached the point where we couldn't drop the price any more," he says, "or we wouldn't have enough for the down payment on the next place."

He was caught between a rock and a hard place. Nobody would buy his condo, and therefore he didn't have enough money for the down payment on the next place. He already agreed to buy "We told them that we can't complete, we can't sell our place, and we'd just have to forfeit our \$80,000."

Partial enough, but it wasn't the beginning. Kassar discovered that even if he sold his old apartment, his bank "wouldn't even consider" giving him a \$1.5-million mortgage for his new place. Prices in Vancouver had been plummeting, and in just a few months, the assessed value of his new place had fallen to roughly \$1.2 million—and his bank wouldn't see a mortgage for more than the property was worth. Meanwhile, the condo developer was finding that it couldn't sell its units either, at least not for anything close to the \$1.5 million Kassar had agreed to pay. So it held a "blow-out sale," offering units for as much as 40 per cent off the original list price. Kassar's unit wasn't one of them, but the sale made it clear that his place was worth even less than \$1.2 million. Shortly after Christmas, the developer told him he was liable for the difference. Michael signed a pre-sale agreement saying he would buy that condo for \$1.3 million, they refunded him, and they reserved the right to pursue him for the drop in that condo's value. Which means they're probably not just going to keep his \$80,000 deposit. They're probably going to come after him for more than \$100,000.

Kassar thought he'd be settled into his gorgeous new purchase by now, but instead, he's still at his old place, facing a long and

expensive court battle with the Bloor Group, owner of the H&H Victoria. He's planning to settle first, with a lawsuit alleging that the developer didn't deliver his unit on time, but he's not sure he's going to win. If he doesn't, "it's a nightmare battle," he says. "It's going to be devastating if we have a judgment against us."

Kassar is just one of thousands of people getting "burned" in the rubble of Vancouver's collapsing prices; a dream shattered and turned into a nightmare, faster than anyone thought possible. For over a decade, the real estate industry has pumped out glowing reports, declaring the latest surge in prices and transactions, and predicting nothing but blue skies ahead. The frenzy culminated in a strong economy, urban renewal and low interest rates triggered a stampede into houses and condos. Now the boom is shifting into reverse, and economists are warning buyers away from their sunny predictions, and grappling with a question no one has posed for 20 years: how bad is it going to get? It's becoming increasingly likely that the answer to that question will be "even worse than you imagined."

The H&H Victoria has now sold out several warning letters to buyers in retreat. Another developer, the Ores Group, is secretly suing at least 20 purchasers of its Area 1 development at Port Moody for backing out of their pre-sale agreements. Real estate developer Amazonco is suing over purchasers of its Morgan Heights development in Surrey. For the time being, Canada's largest mortgage lender is taking out full-page ads in the local papers trumpeting "Vancouver's largest real estate liquidation event"—and John White, a Vancouver lawyer representing several worried buyers, says he now gets about "two or three calls a day" from people who have struck with their contractors.

"No one even came close to realizing the impact of this crisis," Kassar says. Back when he signed his pre-sale agreement, he was following the news, and "they said the real estate market was slowing down, but they were only predicting maybe a one or two per cent drop in property values—nothing in this area!" But Kassar has learned that you shouldn't always believe what you read in the papers and what the economists say on TV. Especially now, because despite the carnage in Vancouver, many real-estate and real-estate groups are still predicting that all they face is a little stumble—maybe a drop of three to eight per cent in prices—until the market will roar back to life by the end of the year. But new data on the plummeting housing market suggests that those relatively upbeat assessments are wrong, and Canada could see a 20 per cent drop in average house prices between now and late 2011. If that predicted

INVESTIGATES are betting that house prices in Canada will drop in value by 20 per cent
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GUY A. LAWRENCE

KASSAM could face a \$300,000 lawsuit for backing out of a sale when prices crashed

creators are correct, it might be close to a decade before we even begin to see prices as high as they were last summer.

About a year ago, Simon Glat, managing director of property domains at National Bank, had a slight idea. He noted that the market had recovered but that there was an oil futures, bond futures, overvalued futures, but there wasn't a way to bet on the future price of Canadian houses. So he decided to launch a whole new market, one that, among other things, would allow investors who think they know where the housing market is going to go money on it. If they thought the house price would go up by the per cent in a year, while others thought prices would go down, they could buy a contract saying so, and if they were right, they could rake in huge profits. The market would also be useful for investors who wanted to hedge against falling house prices: by buying contracts that paid out if house prices declined, they could help to cushion any money they lost in the housing market.

In conjunction with the forward market (like a futures market, but with contracts sold over the counter), National Bank also launched the Toronto National Bank House Price Index, which fits in with where house prices are at right now. The index uses data from BMO, a respected but little-known company that manages the little-known database for the government of Ontario. Because everyone else in the prediction market has to use this database to lay, and National Bank agrees with other companies to access that data, Com says the company's investors are essentially "robust" about the house price data economics currently use. Because most of the current data comes from the real estate industry itself, the Toronto data can boast of coming from more unbiased sources in well.

When the Toronto market started up in December, it immediately predicted a shocking drop of 20 per cent, followed by an increasingly slow recovery that matched some prices return to last year's high for seven years, or longer. It's only young and thinly traded, but the Toronto market outlook is strikingly different from where most economists are. Last week, for instance, the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) predicted a drop of just eight per cent in 2009, followed by a steady recovery (that would see prices starting to edge up again in 2010). Most banks and investment firms (with the exception of Merrill Lynch Canada, which predicted a nice recovery) tell investors with the predictions of drops between eight and 12 per cent.



The future of house prices in Canada



Just about the age, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the government agency that issues billions of dollars worth of Canadian mortgages, predicted that would actually not be an increase in house prices of almost three per cent in 2009. It has since backed out dramatically, making us see forecasts three months later predicting an increase of just 1 per cent. Another revision was scheduled for last week, but the agency cancelled the release at the last minute, saying that the data needed more analysis than expected. They set a new date for the release, but they missed that date too. "Conditions in the housing markets really have been changing," CMHC's chief economist Bob Dugan says. "So we've been doing a series of revisions to our forecasts." He says their latest figures now show that housing prices will go down in 2009, but that doesn't mean he sees any real cause for concern, despite January's largest ever single month job loss figures and our falling GDP. "Where I think at the moment is in a whole," he says. "It's really easy to see the underlying pain." He's been assuring the

numbers and just can't see "the big scary indicators that say things are going south really terribly." So he also predicts just a slight dip followed by a quick recovery. "What that house price growth is going to catch again during the year," he says. "So year over year, you'll see a decrease when you compare 2009 to 2008, but we think that during the year, prices will start to increase again."

The summer forecast of all comes from Royal LePage, a national real estate company. In a recent release entitled "Caution, not crash for Canadian real estate market in 2009," Royal says they will be a minor slip in the per cent, then "consumer confidence and a partial recovery generating real estate activity to pick up once again in the latter half of 2009." Phil Seger, the CEO of Royal LePage, says when you look at both prices and the volume of houses being sold each month, the market has already been declining since the end of 2007, so we're due for a recovery soon. "We'll be looking on about mid-year," he says. "We believe that things will begin to rise in the third quarter, and the recovery will flourish by heading south into the end of the year." He rejects the idea that the industry has lost its predictions. "I can say absolutely that it does not mean in the real estate industry any good to forecast house prices higher than the reality."

So what's right? The economists' predictions are based on a forecast, but the future is uncertain. Royal LePage is an economist professor at York University and an internationally acclaimed expert on housing markets. He is one of the reasons of the 56th CREA House Price Index in the U.S. — the world's most closely watched measure of real estate values. He says he looks like he is for the long-term. "I'd go with the forecasts,"

market," he says. "That's called putting your money where you think it's right."

Shiller says that when the U.S. market peaked in 2006, he saw the same same same but we're not seeing in Canada. Like he, the U.S. housing bubble had a future market. Land was selling at a discount to its true value, and then any one economist's best guess. "I was when you look at the quality of the underlying data itself," the Toronto numbers come out ahead of what the economists are saying. "The National Bank's data says he originally didn't want to produce a housing index at all. If there had been a reliable source for Canadian housing data already, he says he would have likely just used that. But it turned out that the only comprehensive data for real estate prices in Canada came from CREA, the national organization supporting the real estate industry."

'Predictions from the real estate industry are very biased'



Let's say," says Shiller, "because the people trading on the market kept predicting declines. And even once they, they have continued to predict declines." Meanwhile, the economists were still talking of increases, as at least, a minor correction. "The National Association of Realtors had economists that we're beating the market all the time, and doing everything they could to get people in," says Shiller. "These chief economists, David Lereb, even wrote that dreadful book called *Are We Missing the Real Estate Boom?* He wrote that in 2007, just before the peak."

Shiller says that forecasts markets are not predictions because while the predictions made by CMHC, for instance, represent the opinions of one or two economists, the predictions made by analysts are based on the combined best guesses of many analysts who are so concerned of their forecast, they're

willing to literally bet their money on it. At New York writer James Surowiecki decided in his bestselling book *The Wisdom of Crowds*, which predicts a market and to be more accurate than individual predictions, he believes they are less biased and because the collective wisdom they draw upon is more powerful than any one economist's best guess.

Living when you look at the quality of the underlying data itself, the Toronto numbers come out ahead of what the economists are saying. "The National Bank's data says he originally didn't want to produce a housing index at all. If there had been a reliable source for Canadian housing data already, he says he would have likely just used that. But it turned out that the only comprehensive data for real estate prices in Canada came from CREA, the national organization supporting the real estate industry."

Unfortunately, the CREA numbers had problems. "There was a lot of cleaning on their data to do," he says. "Their data is actually physically impacted by real estate agents in their sell the house. And obviously, as a real estate agent, it's your best interest to not state that prices are not falling too much because that's how you make your living." He was also aware of the fact that CREA depends on the co-operation of real estate boards across the country to gather the data, and some weren't shared about selling part.

So, he went with the Toronto data instead, and then he used CREA, which did not respond to interview requests from Maclean's, by adopting a more rigorous method involving methodology. So, like the data Shiller uses, the Toronto data is the result of individual single-family houses in selected metropolitan areas, while CREA uses Canada's Multiple Listing Service (MLS) to add up all the money spent on homes in a given area, then divides it by the number of houses sold. CREA says the real estate industry's data on homebuilding because that has the highest level of sales activity have a disproportionate impact on the national average in other words, if there's more sales activity in Calgary than there is in Ottawa one month, that's the higher prices in Calgary will tilt the numbers up, even though there are roughly the same number of houses in each city.

Beyond the quality of the data, Shiller says their forecast, many economists would say you should trust the forecasts and not over the real estate economists tell you the Toronto forecast isn't trying to sell a house, and the real estate agents are. The predictions from these guys are very biased," he says. "They know that in a declining market, the volume of sales falls dramatically and real estate agents lose their jobs. So they don't want to say anything that could be seen as

contributing to a falling market. If their economist predicted a decline in the market — and then it happens — it's deadly. The guy would have to watch out for his life."

That's part of the reason why David Lereb, the chief economist for the U.S. National Association of Realtors (NAR), kept jumping on the optimistic analysts. He has since withdrawn from the market, but the point he was just under by his losses at the NAR is to get the line. Now the U.S. is a stand in the worst housing crash the country has ever seen, and Lereb has been discredited. He's left his job at the NAR, lost millions in his own real estate portfolio, and he has been largely ostracized by his former colleagues.

We should've strongly insisted that the same couldn't happen here. One of Canada's top economists, who spoke in condition of anonymity, says that he questions a lot of the numbers coming out of the real estate sector in Canada. "It's really a lot of spin," he says. Toronto CMHC, which produces the house price index, depends on home sales to set mortgage insurance, has an interest in seeing the market prosper. "There is quite a lot of uncertainty in getting the numbers in general right now, and there are no very accurate numbers who are going to set a reasonable analysis on that outlook."

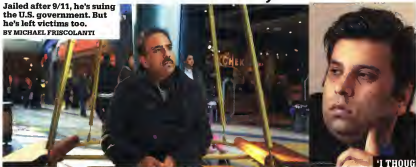
That leaves you the question of the Toronto market. It's right, and the price is about to end up in a long, slow decline. Followed by an uncertain recovery, which will that mean for Canada? On the positive side, it will mean thousands of Torontonians who can't currently afford houses may gradually see them fall within reach, but the negative fall itself will be painful, long-lasting and will reach us all. It will mean more homeless people like the Ross Kassam, who got trapped by borrowing prices. It will mean a huge drop in the wealth of millions of Canadians, as their biggest investment slowly sinks in value. It will mean consumers changing down or their spending because they feel poorer, contributing to the general economic decline.

Shiller says it's the inevitable and it's really wild ride. "We've never before had this sort of selling market, or can buy a house in any city and prices will just keep going up," he says. "This cultural change helped to bring on the world's largest housing bubble, and that bubble has ended in Canada, just as it has in other countries." It's time to brace yourself, he says, because that bubble has popped. "Over the coming years, homeowners will be spending more money, and will largely ignore the pessimistic advice. Shiller says it's necessary correction, but that doesn't mean the process will be a pleasant one. "We may be in for a bad recession," he says, "and we may not see the markets perform well for a long time." ■

AFTER THE DETENTION, A BETRAYAL

jailed after 9/11, he's suing the U.S. government. But he's left victims too.

BY MICHAEL FRISCOLANTI



SHAHID SIDDIQUI (above) claims Abul Basma (right) swiped him for \$4,000

Eight days after the World Trade Center crumbled from the New York skyline, a team of federal agents paid a visit to a small run-down school in Manhattan. With tanks rolling in from the rear of Grand Zehn, the officers were searching for one specific student: a Canadian citizen named Shahr Baloch.

The FBI was anxious to know how the Toronto-born, originally from Pakistan, entered the United States. They peppered him with pointed questions. Is your visa valid? Are you a devout Muslim? Do you recognize any of the men who touched your airplane? Still suspicious after a four-hour interrogation, the agents escorted Baloch to a detention center downtown. He spent that night—and the next seven months—behind bars. “I call it the death valley,” he says now, sitting in a crowded Scarborough coffee shop. “They were threatening to arrest my family and revoke my Canadian citizenship. I was very afraid.”

One person mentioned exactly what Baloch was going through: Abul Basma, another Canadian arrested by American and British troops during days after 9/11. Later Baloch was living quietly in the U.S. when the towers fell, and quickly found himself swept up in a massive anti-terror dragnet.

They met for the first time in April 2002. Baloch, eventually cleared of any terrorist ties,

had just been transferred to New Jersey's Passaic County Jail, the last stop before his deportation to Canada. Siddiqui—a Hindu originally from India—had been held there for three months already. “The man I was living with,” Baloch recalls, “told me we were both from Canada.” They played pool together, then talked about life in Toronto, and promised to meet on the other side in soon as they were free. Two weeks later, when Baloch was told he was finally going home, he made sure to give Siddiqui his phone number.

Back in Ontario, their friendship blossomed. Along with Tim Harman, co-owner and the head cook to the cuisine, both men joined a dance studio, learned a little about the U.S. government, and, at one point, even traveled to the States. They were warmly welcomed because of their native religion, and nothing there. The case is pending, but the U.S. Supreme Court heard a similar complaint in December, and the judgment, expected later this year, will have major implications for Baloch and Siddiqui. The men who were so close friends and who took their friendship across the border found out after they have the legal right to sue senior White House officials.

One thing, however, is already certain: Whenever that ruling is handed down, Baloch and Siddiqui will not be flying through it together. Even if it's favorable, there won't

be any celebratory toast or triumphant phone calls. In fact, Baloch has received four court orders to stop any contact. Later, so many others who were duped before him, he recently filed a criminal—as a cost of \$64,000—who Siddiqui is suing, a convincing, never-ending lawsuit. He accused of bilking friends and strangers out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in order to feed his high-stakes gambling habit.

According to court records and police files, Abul Siddiqui—a man once portrayed as the quintessential victim in both the New York Times and the Toronto Star—has left behind his own trail of victims: returning to Canada in 2003, blessed with an innocent girl and the gift of jobs, the 46-year-old connected fraudster has posed himself off as everything from a high-motivated investor to a globally ill cancer patient—anything to get someone's heart. In Baloch's view, Siddiqui convinced him into buying a small agency that wasn't his and wasn't for sale. Siddiqui wrote him two cheques and wanted for the paperwork to be sent arrived. “I trusted him blindly,” he says. “I thought we had such a horrible time together that he wouldn't think I was stupid to cheat me.”

It's like a con man, but Baloch, now 47, got off relatively easy. Bankruptcy records reveal that Siddiqui owes a staggering amount

of money to financial institutions, credit card companies, and at least three other people. Most, like Baloch, believed he was an honest man. One ex-girlfriend, Radha Baloch, claims court documents that he changed her out of a shopping bag \$18,000, which he promptly squandered at the blackjack table. “It's outrageous,” says her lawyer, Peter O'Hare. “It is such a con artist. There is no remorse, no compassion, no empathy. And he's made himself out to be the victim. Poor him.”

Today, Siddiqui is nowhere to be found. His cellphone is turned off, he's left no return-page mails, and his lawyers, Brian A. Longman, declined to comment when contacted by McClintock. As recently as October, Siddiqui claimed he was living with an acquaintance in London, Ont. But when reached last week, the woman, who asked that her name not be published, said Siddiqui “lived there in more than a year. She also had no idea her former tenant fled the bankruptcy.” “Honestly, I'm on the verge of crying,” she said. “I've seen my money.” “How much, exactly?” “I don't want to talk about that. But it's quite a bit.”

In his portion of the American lawsuit, Siddiqui claims he was “deceived by misleadings,” assisted by attorneys, and lured from contacting the Canadian consulate dur-

ing his stint as Prime (in 2004, the Times wrote he was to compare the jail to Abu Ghraib). But now that his criminal past is exposed, it's hard to imagine that U.S. jury would believe a single word he says. It's nearly difficult to imagine how a man with such a disreputable—adding a criminal record in the United States—managed to immigrate to Canada in the first place.

Those details may never be disclosed, for privacy reasons, immigration officials never discuss individual cases, so it's impossible to even verify Siddiqui's claim that he became a citizen in 2001. But this much is known: In July 1998, while living in the U.S. on an expired visitor's visa, Siddiqui was arrested at a storefront in Queens and charged with possession of a dangerous device. He was allegedly using fake Tommy Hilfery labels on “otherwise ordinary blue jeans.” A week later, he moved to Canada as a landed immigrant.

For a while, Siddiqui managed to stay on top of the system. In November 1999, while living in Toronto, he married a woman who had immigrated to meet him. A U.S. woman two months earlier. She applied to open her own business, but when her request was denied a year later, the couple split. In fact, Siddiqui insists he was in New York to

sign his name as Prime (in 2004, the Times wrote he was to compare the jail to Abu Ghraib). But now that his criminal past is exposed, it's hard to imagine that U.S. jury would believe a single word he says. It's nearly difficult to imagine how a man with such a disreputable—adding a criminal record in the United States—managed to immigrate to Canada in the first place.

On his assessment of defense, Siddiqui and the gambling was all that mattered. “She told me to go home and play for her as her card was not with her,” he wrote. Siddiqui met his next partner in 2004. He married Mohamed Hameed that he was a savvy investor with a history of heavy losses, and by the time Hameed realized the truth, he was already in the hole more than \$220,000. Siddiqui was later arrested, convicted of fraud, and ordered to pay a restitution of \$178,845—an monthly installment of \$250.

Siddiqui was next. Just as he and his friend were about to provide sworn depositions for their U.S. lawsuit, Siddiqui phoned him the travel agency idea. As soon as he cashed Baloch's cheque, he disappeared.

Five months ago, Siddiqui did surface briefly for a one-day hearing in Toronto. Now officially bankrupt, he was sitting the court to discharge his debts and grant him a fresh start. Among other things, he brought along a letter from his mental health counselor that confirmed his “pathological” gambling addiction and warned it on “an inability to cope” with that “transient state” in U.S. custody. On the witness stand, however, Siddiqui continued to claim the truth. The tag granted that Baloch gave him \$54,000—roughly on his behalf, not to buy a travel agency. Scott Morris, the bankruptcy supervisor, didn't buy his story. “Clearly such an arrangement could not have been an account of [Siddiqui's] grant assistance as a gambler, since he had been” the discharge application was denied.

Should Baloch want to the courtroom this morning. It was the first time he had spoken his former partner in almost two years, and during a process, he confronted him in the hallway. “I said ‘Why did you do this to me? I would never do that to some person I was in death valley with.’” Baloch says his old friend seemed genuinely remorseful. He apologized repeatedly, pinned the whole thing on his gambling problem, and vowed to reimburse the cash, once and for all. For a few weeks, at least, Baloch seems to have believed. “I became greedy a little bit, now,” he admits. “I just wanted to be optimistic that maybe I would get my money back.”

Four months later, he told him he heard from Siddiqui. “I was born as a Hindu,” he says. “But at the same time, I find very scary and very sad what he did to me.” ■

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'I THOUGHT WE'D HAD SUCH A HORRIBLE TIME TOGETHER, HE WOULDN'T CHEAT ME'

WHO'S SUING WHOM

PHOTOGRAPH BY COLA BUNTON

MODERN ESSENTIALS: FOOD, WATER AND TV

A judge in Complex, Basel, has awarded US\$3.2 million in damages to a man who said giant lawsuits claim him for a faulty television. The underfired judge had sought “total damages” for not being able to watch TV in making the award, the judge declared that consumers are an “essential good” and that “without news on the news network, the national network is a big brother, the national news broadcast or a football game”.



MEN AND WOMEN DIFFER AT HEART

Women often downplay their risks and symptoms. So do some men around them.



BY CATHY DELLE Talk to most doctors about heart disease for long enough and one phrase is bound to come up: "It's a neglected opportunity threat," says Dr. Beth Altmann, a spokesperson for the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada and director of the cardiac prevention and rehab centre and women's cardiac division at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. Today, just about the same number of men and women succumb to heart disease and stroke, about 35,000 annually. Yet "when people hear these words and think of someone having a heart attack, they think of a man," she says. "It's perceived to be a man's disease. It's not."

In fact, one in three Canadian women will die of heart disease and stroke—compared to one in 10 for lung cancer and one in 18 from

breast cancer. By 2020, stroke mortality in the U.S. is projected to be 30 per cent higher for females than males. Despite the staggeringly high risks, the issue is only gaining widespread recognition. "We missed [female] patients were so surprised to have had a heart attack," says Dr. Susan Koon, director of the women's heart program at George Washington University Hospital in Washington. The thinking was, "Everybody was checking my breasts and uterus, but nobody was talking to me about heart disease."

Every year, *Maclean's* features its "How Healthy Are You?" series focusing on the well-being of Canadians. Of the 10,000 people who participated in an online survey of over all health called the Q-Gen, which is posted at www.macleans.ca/health, cardiovascular symptoms such as chest pain and breathlessness were the least reported ailments by men and women—even though "these symptoms are known to be mostly exhibited among people with sudden heart and vascular conditions," says Dr. Elaine Chin, chief medical officer of Toronto's St. Michael's, which co-ordinated the test. This may also

WOMEN tend to develop "atypical" dysfunction. Their hearts shrink, even's message.

prove that heart disease just isn't on a lot of people's radar, especially among females. That's changing. Massive awareness campaigns are under way. The U.S. Women's Heart Foundation dyes out people ribbons. Feb. 6 has been declared "National Wear Red Day" by the American Heart Association. And the Heart & Stroke Foundation has launched "The Heart Truth" campaign—its official symbol is a red dress pin to boost education about female risk factors.

The campaign is happening at the same time as research is becoming strong. Groups such as the Toronto project, which was established in 2004 and is partly funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Information, are identifying how diagnosis, treatment and perception vary between genders. Already there are stark contrasts. Women usually develop heart disease 10 years later than men, and sometimes suffer atypical symptoms. Congestive heart failure can look different between the sexes—in females, the heart gets thick and small, in males, it becomes enlarged. Women are also up to 30 per cent more likely to drop out of cardiac rehabilitation programs after a heart attack than men.

There's still a lot to figure out. More than 30 years ago, twice as many men died of heart attack as women. It was a "man's disease." But over time, a growing trend has been observed: while male mortality rates for heart disease and stroke have been declining, women's have risen, working in support by the Heart & Stroke Foundation. Between 1974 and 2005, the number of men who died from heart disease and stroke dropped 56 per cent, during that same period, the number of female deaths rose by five per cent. For the first time in three decades, the mortality gap had closed in. (The latest Statistics Canada data shows the number of deaths from heart disease declining slightly in 2004.)

But over the years, another gap surfaced. Because men were the primary population affected with heart disease, their way of articulating symptoms defined classic diagnostic criteria. Treatments were established accordingly: how well they worked on men, who until recently made up the majority of participants in clinical trials. All this contributed to a gender bias among the public and health-care professionals. Women downplayed symptoms, and doctors often diagnosed them from after a heart attack. Research has historically been under-referred to specialists and heart-lung bypass surgery and angiography less often than men. One 2003 study showed that only 17 per cent of cardiologists in the U.S. knew that more American women die from heart disease each year than men.



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—Tracee Chambers, Cancer survivor
Newmarket, Ontario resident

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HEALTH: SPECIAL REPORT

The first step in fighting heart disease is, of course, recognizing symptoms—which isn't always easy. Chest heaviness or pain is the most common indication of heart troubles (seeing both sexes (along with middle-aged feeling cold, dizziness or shortness of breath), explains *Altenstein*, but women are more attuned to it "as an unusual burning." Dr. Louise Foley, associate investigator of risk factors and director of general internal medicine at McGill University Health Centre in Montreal says that instead of pain radiating down the shoulder and into the jaw, which is typical, some women feel it more in their neck and back. Others just experience more dizziness, sleep disturbances or extreme fatigue. These symptoms make diagnosis especially tough, because even when a female seeks medical attention, heart disease "is not the first thing you think about when a woman says 'I'm so tired,'" says Foley.

The poor Anne Bailey was 46, she used to get clean jobs and they wouldn't go away until she barged. She was a cousin of seven there, and besides taking care of her own home, she had a job driving the local doctor's office in rural Sydney Mines, N.S. Eventually, Bailey got around to telling him about her discomfort. The doctor diagnosed her with angina, which occurs when not enough blood is getting to the heart. "I said, 'So,'" recalls Bailey, now 66. His reply was direct: "You could be having a heart attack and not even know it." Bailey says she cried, got her pills, and pushed it out of her mind. "But I should have stopped and listened right then. I was just too busy to worry about it."

Bailey, who once then had five blocked arteries, open heart surgery, and two pacemakers, is representative of many women in that she minimized her risk of heart disease and downplayed her symptoms. Fortunately, her doctors and family took their seriously (and she's received prompt care along the way) but not every lonely experience ends so support. About one-third of the two female patients, each whose partner suffered symptoms of a heart attack but received different responses from their husbands. One was taken to ER immediately, the other told it was probably fine and to go back to work. "The first woman was diagnosed with a heart attack and had a successful angioplasty," says *Altenstein*. The other didn't get timely medical attention and her health deteriorated. "I'm telling you this because women and men and their family need to be aware of the threat," she adds.

That support system is also important in the aftermath of a heart event, when patients are sometimes referred to cardiac rehabilitation to improve their fitness, learn about nutrition and occasionally receive counseling. Chris Blanchard is a health psychologist at Dalhousie University in Halifax, studying 1,100 Canadians to figure out why women are up to 30 per cent more likely to quit these programs than men. One of the big obstacles appears to be that females put themselves low on the totem pole of priorities. "They are caretakers for other people, and they underfeel themselves," he says. Out of a typical 20-session rehab program, men will attend 80 per cent of the time, compared to women who will make it 50 or 60 per cent of the time. If the sessions are home-based, male adherence stays the same, but then women's plummet to 30 per cent. "That's the biggest gender discrepancy I've seen," he says.

It's not enough to say just published research showed that 30 min of physical activity a week leads to a 30 per cent increase in patient survival. "So if we know first women are doing less physical activity, then we know that they're potentially placing themselves at increased risk."

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CARDIAC CARE: Women are 30 per cent more likely to quit

for men and perinatal mortality," Blanchard explains. "That's a huge impact." Blanchard says his team has observed other differences between men and women when it comes to cardiac rehab. Many females don't like to exercise in a group setting. They're also referred to these programs by physicians less often. When women do attend sessions, many say they don't like working out alongside so many men—there's often a one-to-five ratio. To address these issues, some health districts across the country have implemented automatic referrals to cardiac rehab and are offering female-only sessions.

For Natalie Gurdue, 44, cardiac rehab has proven a lifesaver. When her congenital heart problems flared up after giving birth to her youngest daughter a few years ago, she

nearly died. Juggling a newborn plus two other children and a full-time job made navigating the heart of her concerns. "But once things were organized with child care, work and daily life, I really looked forward to going," says Gurdue from Halifax. "It was a short-term adjustment for a long-term gain."

It's understandable why many women are sometimes surprised by their heart disease compared to men. But that attitude pertains, to some degree, in the world of disease research too. In 2006, a team of Toronto researchers led by Dr. Peter Libby were the first in the world to show that congestive heart failure, which happens when heart or valves get weak or stiff—often looks different in each sex.

Men tend to suffer "systemic dysfunction" (systemic pressure is the top number when your blood pressure is taken). Their damaged hearts get bigger, explains Libby, senior chief of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and a cardiologist at the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre, where, on the other hand, often develop "diastolic dysfunction." Their hearts shrink and become thickly layered without those systemic dysfunction means the heart has trouble pumping blood out, diastolic dysfunction means the heart has trouble filling up with blood. "Most of the treatments we have are geared toward the big heart because that's what was commonly recognized and studied," he says. But

there's not a ready way to determine ways of dealing with the diastolic problems. It's worth noting, too, adds, that when his team's findings were published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, some critics suggested his study participants were unusual or the findings accidental. But they have since been replicated globally. Libby believes that when it comes to disease, gender differences are sometimes de-emphasized or overlooked. "We make cardiac assumptions, and to be socially correct we try to minimize differences," Libby says. But Bennett believes understanding how disease manifest in each gender is "the first step in personalized medicine."

Adds Libby, "I think it is very important to recognize that, in fact, men and women are different from the day the heart develops." Until the day it stops beating. ■

GROWING A NEW HEART

The quest to use the body's own cells to fix a damaged heart

HOW HEALTHY ARE YOU?

BY RAYE LOMAX • How do you mend a broken heart? For the scientists, an equivalent of the mythic siren song doesn't exist, it just takes time. Chip off a piece of its heart, says Gordon Keller, director of the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine at Toronto, and it will eventually regrow itself. "Why can the fish do it," he wonders, "and we can't?" Maybe, one day, they could change.

After a heart attack, a scar is left behind, disrupting pumping action, "which can result, eventually, in heart failure," says Ottawa cardiologist Dr. Andreas Waligowski, spokesperson for the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada. Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer in Canada—yet cell-based therapies are still new hope for restoring damaged organs. Using the body's own building blocks, researchers are attempting to coax the heart into regenerating functioning tissue where a scar would otherwise be.

Last year, Keller's team at the McEwen Centre became the first in the world to successfully grow human heart progenitor cells (cardiac stem cells) from embryonic stem cells. When allowed to mature, these cells give rise to functional heart cells that can actually be seen pulsing in a petri dish. "It's really on par with our cutting edge, to say we can regenerate heart tissue," Keller says. "But given we can make human heart cells, we have, for the first time, the ability to test this hypothesis." Embryonic stem cells aren't the only type that can be used to make heart cells. Keller's team is now creating them from a patient's adult cells (taken from a skin biopsy) which have been genetically reprogrammed to an embryonic-like state.

As the building blocks of the human heart, the potential to heal seems enormous—but how to use them in the chase? Injecting lab-grown heart cells directly into the organ is one technique being tested on animal models, Keller says, but for reasons that aren't entirely understood, "the heart is hostile to transplanted cells." Most of them die. "Receiving cells across a scar that could be healed on the heart, like a heart attack, may be a better option. But, really, hearts remain

creating enough heart cells to build such a patch is a challenge, so it's ensuring it would integrate electrically and mechanically with the heart," says Peter Zandbergen, a bioprocessor at the McEwen Centre and the University of Toronto. He's working on engineering heart tissue in the lab, as well as new ways to create large numbers of cells, in the hope of creating patches that could one day be transplanted into hearts.

McEwen researchers aren't the only Canadian group looking at cell transplantation. At the Ottawa Health Research Institute (OHRI), a team led by Dr. Duncan Stewart is set to begin the first ever trial of an engineered cell therapy for heart disease. So-called cells will be harvested from the blood of roughly 100 heart attack patients, and genetically altered to make them more robust.

The supercharged cells will then be injected into the patient's heart through the blocked artery. Like Keller, Stewart notes that one challenge is making sure transplanted cells stick around long enough to stimulate repair. "That's where lab work comes in: 'Because we're culturing our cells, they actually change shape,'" says Stewart, CEO and associate director of OHRI. "They're no longer small and round; they become larger and odd shaped. They're overgrowing to go through capillaries directly, so they get delivered to the heart."

Stem cells don't have to come from a petri dish to have a regenerative effect. In fact, they're found throughout our bodies and help us heal "so we don't fall apart," says Dr. Marc Ruel, a cardiac surgeon at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI). When a heart attack occurs, dying or in danger to send out signals to summon them to help

in the damaged area. Instead of transplanted cells, "the ideal may be to amplify the body's own signals and the number of cells that respond," says Dr. Christopher Glewe, a cardiologist at the UOHI and associate professor of medicine at the University of Ottawa. He's been conducting a trial that attempts to do that.

About three years ago, Glewe, 42, began recruiting heart attack patients in an effort to stimulate their own cells for repair. Before the days of having a heart attack, and participants are given a drug that pulls stem cells from the bone marrow into the blood stream, in the hope they'll travel to the heart and become functioning heart cells. "There's some reason our bodies can do [cardiac repair]," Glewe says. "If we amplify the response, perhaps we'll get more repair." The trial is set to wrap up in the coming months, subjects are doing "no better than expected," he says.

Harnessing the body's own cells was also the goal behind an experiment that made headlines around the world in January in what was called "the biggest heart break-through since the moon." Ottawa researchers created an organic, cell-grown heart patch, then injected it into damaged tissue, where the body's cells to spur regeneration. After injecting it into the thigh muscle of lab rats, which had lost blood flow after the main artery was cut, the team managed to grow coronary new blood vessels over a one-week period. The

patch "provides a place where the cells move, rather than die off," explains Ruel, who's the UOHI scientist who led the study. Those cells then "start sending out signals to attract even more cells."

Their finding has huge implications for

THEY'VE CREATED FUNCTIONAL HEART CELLS THAT CAN BE SEEN PULSING IN A PETRI DISH



ZERRARIH—They can repair bits of heart muscle, why can't we?

TONICS

MILK ISN'T THE ONLY BOVINE HEALTH DRINK
The cow protection department of Irish Hindu nationalist group Revolution For Awareness (RFA) is proposing a new fitness health drink. Cow Wishes, which they support can cure liver disease and even cancer. The drink is essentially distilled cow urine, mixed with herbs. A spokesman says that the drink could compete with Coca-Cola. "We're going to give them good competition as our drink is good for mankind."



DR. GORDON KELLER (left), researchers at the McEwen Centre's lab might one day create a kind of patch for the heart.

treating a number of conditions, including cardiovascular disease. The patch's ability to help grow muscle cells has not yet been tested, Stewart says. But then is a restored blood flow, "flying cells may occur," resulting in less scar tissue and a healthier organ. Of course, many challenges remain. "There's two times we're trying to create blood ves-

sels and contractile tissue," says Ruel, who collaborated with Stewart on the project. Cardiovascular cells have proven more difficult to occur, he says, adding that the UOHI team is working on this piece now.

At Dalhousie University in Halifax, Naboor Pannambath, associate professor in the department of pharmacology, is aiming to reduce scar damage after a heart attack by doing what he once thought couldn't be done—lack starting cell division in adult heart muscle tissue. Cell division in the heart stops in early infancy, he explains, which is why muscle cells that die after a heart attack are replaced by a

scar. By putting cell-cycle promoters (which control cell division) into the damaged heart tissue of genetically altered mice, Pannambath's lab has managed to reduce scarring by 30 per cent, and to improve the heart's contractile function, too. "If we can do that, why not man?" he says. "Maybe, at one point, we won't see any scar there at all."

Cell-based therapies, many of them being developed in Canada, offer hope for fixing damaged hearts—although, experts say, their practical application isn't as easy as it seems. Even so, "it's not crazy to think that, in 15 years, we may treat all stable ischemic heart disease with stem cell therapy," Ruel says. Instead of heart muscle interventions, like surgery or heart stent placement, he says, we're approaching "the age of biological organs."

Ruel believes it's just a matter of time. "We know it's going to work. We're living proof of it," he says. After all, each of us grew from a tiny mass of stem cells into a fully formed adult. "Nature proves this concept every day." ■

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NO ROOM FOR GIFTED KIDS

As parents fight for scarce resources, bright young minds are left to languish

BY NACHIE MENSELESON • **John Marshall** hadn't started teaching her son to read 30 days ago when she was pregnant with her second child, Jeremy, barely four, sounding out words on a page in their basement apartment in Mississauga, Ont. Apparently, he had figured it out himself. Only when he started school did she realize how different he was. As his classmates learned phonics, Marshall says her son, who by then had graduated to the *Merry Wives* series, sat alone with a novel.

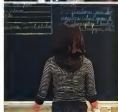
Despite Jeremy's abilities, his overall performance was poor. Until, at the end of Grade 1, his teacher suggested he might be gifted, and thus eligible for a place in a specialized class. But when Marshall, who asked that her real name not be used, approached the principal, she was told that because of Jeremy's poor handwriting and social skills, "he would serve his own and society best." Disappointed, she cut off the family's Internet service to save for a private tutor. But when she presented the results—Jeremy was found to possess profound giftedness as well as signs of a learning disability—his Grade 2 teacher picked out words and chattered him when he encountered difficulties. "She was always saying things like 'Aren't you supposed to be smart?'" says Marshall.

For decades, the nation's education policy makers have acknowledged that intense intellect often comes at a price. But as funding cuts and the push for inclusion have made regular classrooms ground zero for students with special needs—everything from giftedness to ADHD—teachers are struggling to satisfy a range of abilities that's wider than ever before. And the country's brightest minds, say advocates, are languishing. According to advocates, the problem is solvable. Gifted programs are dwindling, and fewer students are receiving formal identifications. The stakes, meanwhile, are high.

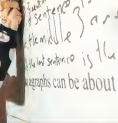
Studies have shown that gifted students, who make up about two per cent of the population, risk social alienation and behavioral problems. It's possible for these kids, as well as the profoundly gifted (the top 1 per cent), to be saddled with a learning disability. And though their potential to achieve may trump that of their classmates, as some experts have found, so does their propensity to drop out.

But as parents scramble, the battles for limited special education dollars become highly polarized. As former Edmonton Public Schools superintendent Michael Stronchuk points out, "Every dollar that is provided to one group, that's a dollar less to another group." And when forced to choose, some argue that students can be flustered by dropping the inclusion focus of those whose struggle is most apparent.

The very notion of cognitive intellect as a special asset is as desirable a speech topic as making accommodations for students with autism. At York Ontario, co-author of a University of Ontario study on the advocacy experiences of parents of gifted children, explains, "The second reason in this gifted kids debate has to do with the fact that when while, education officials are aware they haven't taken sides, that even in regular classrooms, gifted kids are getting the support they require. But in B.C., the number of students identified as gifted has dropped by nearly half since 2000. (The decline coincides with the province's 2002 decision to stop earmarking special education dollars, which, says Education Minister Shirley Bond, gives boards "flexibility" to "best meet those needs.") According to ministry records, the number of students receiving gifted programming has stayed consistent in Ontario and Alberta. But across and identification of students vary. About four per cent of students in Ontario's Caledonia District School Board's centers for giftedness are high, because only a handful of students had been identified. In July 2009, the special education board ruled in its favour, identifying Cameron, by then in Grade 8, as gifted, and ordering the board to place him in a full-time high school program. When September rolled around, however, no



of course, it's a process problem," he says. At both local and provincial levels, meanwhile, education officials insist they haven't taken sides, that even in regular classrooms, gifted kids are getting the support they require. But in B.C., the number of students identified as gifted has dropped by nearly half since 2000. (The decline coincides with the province's 2002 decision to stop earmarking special education dollars, which, says Education Minister Shirley Bond, gives boards "flexibility" to "best meet those needs.") According to ministry records, the number of students receiving gifted programming has stayed consistent in Ontario and Alberta. But across and identification of students vary. About four per cent of students in Ontario's Caledonia District School Board's centers for giftedness are high, because only a handful of students had been identified. In July 2009, the special education board ruled in its favour, identifying Cameron, by then in Grade 8, as gifted, and ordering the board to place him in a full-time high school program. When September rolled around, however, no



AFTER LOSING A COURT BATTLE, ONE SCHOOL BOARD PAID FOR A PRIVATE CAR TO DRIVE A CHILD TO A GIFTED CLASS



GIFTED PROGRAMS In Alberta, identifying a gifted student no longer brings a school extra funds. Identifying a "conduct disorder" can bring in more than \$10,000.

will claim they don't have any gifted kids. "Whether boards are doing enough to identify gifted students is open to interpretation. But since the data turned toward inclusion, Ontario has seen some of the most protracted parent-board conflicts surrounding special education students, including gifted kids. Unique legislation, passed in 1980, requires boards to have provided in place the very identification of exceptional students, and either provide them with programming or purchase it from another board. And, significantly, if parents disagree with the outcome of an assessment or a placement decision, they're entitled to an appeal.

Consent resident Michele Alesci insists that this made sense because Cameron (last name was Gordon) was identified as gifted by the Upper Caledonia District School Board's centers for giftedness was too high, because only a handful of students had been identified. In July 2009, the special education board ruled in its favour, identifying Cameron, by then in Grade 8, as gifted, and ordering the board to place him in a full-time high school program. When September rolled around, however, no



GIFTED PROGRAMS In Alberta, identifying a gifted student no longer brings a school extra funds. Identifying a "conduct disorder" can bring in more than \$10,000.

placed an over lunch, which he accepted it paid for him a private car transport. Cameron then a full-time gifted class for the duration of his high school career. (The board had provided the same solution for his two siblings, the youngest of whom is currently in Grade 12. Alesci estimates the annual cost to be close to \$50,000.) "I will consider myself kind of concerned by the whole thing," she says. "It's hard to decide how you feel when you're not to believe you have certain rights and privileges, and that the process is there to protect your child—and you discover it does not."

The board declined an interview. But as an email, the superintendent of education's office said that since the ruling, the board

has begun sending all Grade 4 students for gifted tests, but still not enrolling them in gifted programs, and developed a coaching model to help students with difficult reading assignments.

In the vast majority of jurisdictions, however, the power—not the process—remains the primary watchdog. "We are required to do it, but the problem is the province and the ministry have not enforced [the legislation]," says Ontario's Halton Catholic District School Board trustee Bob Van der Vriend. "That's a huge unmet need." It's a gap that has also opened the door to costly demands that controversial boards may be on the hook to meet. Although some parents are pleased, according to gifted education expert David Matthews, "There are people who take it too far in terms of what their kids need."

Pressure from governments, teachers and parents causes the courts to castigate special education services merely the subject of a court decision. Still, there are signs that as some jurisdictions, systemic changes are underway. The Ontario government is training teachers already on the job to identify a range of abilities through differentiated instruction, and recently gave the Ontario Psychological Association a \$10-million grant to create the backlog in assessments for all exceptional students. Recruitment efforts are underway in B.C. to fill school board psychological vacancies. And Alberta is creating a new framework for special education through public school reform—which, according to Stronchuk, who served as superintendent in Edmonton for 25 years, is key to saving all conflict. "In the absence of transparency, you get the differentiating groups, each taking their own path," he says.

Jeremy Marshall's family was fortunate to find solutions. Halfway through Grade 2, they eventually moved to a neighborhood that had school with a gifted program. Eventually, his mother knew they had made the right decision. "It would come home and talk about the other kids in his class. He knew their names, he knew where they looked like. He was attracted to them." Today, Jeremy is a well-adjusted 13-year-old, who babysits and often MMs school assemblies. "His is different now than that mascot little kid who just loved to read," she says. "It's hard having other gifted children. I probably allowed him to have a normal life."



BLACKBOARD JUNGLE The British school principal called for Nathan and Benjamin Blake to find the most intense place to read a book. Their classroom teacher Jonathan Blake concluded that their behavior was the sign of a family home and the boys calmly read the *Little House* books. But the police arrested them and said of suspicion of child cruelty. "I have always been a great supporter of the police," he said afterwards, "but this right-to-know experience has shattered my trust."

PAGE

1



KATIE WINSLET seduces an adolescent virgin in *The Reader*. These are women on the attack, not damaged souls.

Man-less women rule the Oscars

This year's Best Actress nominees all play solitary souls with a subversive streak

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON • Meryl Streep has been interesting the lack of good roles for women for most of her career, most famously in 1998 when she had Hollywood men run by a man's club of "rugged, greedy people" who seemed determined to crush women from the screen. Who could blame her? She had just turned 40, well past Hollywood's expiry date for leading ladies. But this year Streep, 51, is, as in the highest grossing musical of all time (*August: Osage County*) and broke records with her 15th Oscar nomination, the best. And finally, thank God. All those actors who once complained that Meryl took all the good female roles came to realize suddenly that there are more than enough to go around.

Are five actresses vying to be named Best Actress at the Oscars this Sunday—Meryl Streep, Angelina Jolie, Annette Bening, Kate Winslet, and Melissa Leo—play formidable, not effusive women who come armed with their own stories. None of these characters is dependent on a man. None is even involved with a man, unless you count Winslet's child seducing an adolescent virgin in *The Reader*. These are women on the attack. Compare that to recent years, when the most reliable way for women to seduce Oscar was to play a martyr or victim. During the past decade, half the Best Actress winners portrayed damaged souls who died at the end of the movie.

And occasionally, even out of an played real-life characters—from Nicole Kidman's Virginia Slims to Marion Cotillard's Edith Piaf—as if drowning up strong fictional women was beyond Hollywood's imagination.

But this year, we've seen an abundance of bold female leads. Only one of the five Best Actress nominees is playing a real-life figure: Jolie as a persecuted mother who battles a

corrupt police force in *The Changeling*. The other characters are all from imagination. In Rachel Watson's *Married at First Sight*, Annette Bening's *Love & Other Drugs*, and Kate Winslet's *The Reader*, she plays the role of a Jewish refugee who hides through her sister's wedding, upstaging the bride. In *Frances Ha*, Melissa Leo is a white-trash single mother who tries to make ends meet by using a dog as a mascot across the U.S.-Canada border in the trunk of her car. Streep plays an underdog man on the way up in *August: Osage County* and the *Reader*'s Winslet plays to her role as a former Nazi death camp guard with no concept of remorse.

Aside from these nominated performances, several that were accompanied by equal or greater acclaim—including Michelle Williams's mesmerizing *Promised Land* as a woman who loses her dog in *Wild* and Leo's *Steve Jobs*—showcase women in an era of women's power. These women are not just actors; they are actresses. And they are all playing roles that are as complex as the women they play. In *Frances Ha*, Leo plays a woman who is a former Nazi death camp guard with no concept of remorse.

And they are all playing roles that are as complex as the women they play.

In this year of the hardened heroine, all the Best Actress candidates play solitary women with a subversive streak. The most notable ones, Jolie and Streep, are women who are not just actors; they are actresses. And they are all playing roles that are as complex as the women they play. In *Frances Ha*, Leo plays a woman who is a former Nazi death camp guard with no concept of remorse.

Winslet's character is even more. What makes it so is the way she is played. The movie is a comedy, but it is also a tragedy. Winslet's character is a woman who is a former Nazi death camp guard with no concept of remorse. And she is playing a role that is as complex as the woman she plays.

And they are all playing roles that are as complex as the women they play.



WE'RE TALKING... MICHAEL CAINE

They don't make them like this anymore. It's 35 years of marriage to his wife, Susan, Caine has never been tempted to stray, even after working with the lovely Miss Kate Winslet in *The Reader*. Caine met his 61-year-old wife after seeing her in a coffee ad. "I married a woman who, in actual fact, is more beautiful than most women I've worked with, so all the temptation was at home, not at work. So I rush home to get some temptation."



IT'S ALL THE BAZE: A shoe in Wenzhou, China, turns shoe-throwing into a promotional event in which customers abound for discounts

My Manolos have something to say

The George Bush shoe-throwing incident has inspired a worldwide outpouring of creativity

BY ALEXANDRA SHIMO • Is it better to be egged or pelted? Neither, according to a growing number who have declared the food and shoe-throwing trend, and even make art about the rebellion act.

This creative outpouring was set off by the infamous shoe tossed at former president George W. Bush by an Irish journalist. Two years later, it was a symbol of disrespect in the Middle East, says Amanda Hobbart, a contributing editor for *Forbes* Magazine in Washington. Simply throwing someone the shoe of your choice, let alone aiming the shoe at a president, is also against the rules of the game, which explains why the statue of Ted Davis in Hawaii was pelted with shoes and sandals when it was toppled in April 2009.

From the Middle East, shoe-throwing spread to the rest of the world, becoming a general symbol of disrespect and rebellion. In Toronto last December, shoes were pelted at U.S. consulate as a sign of support for the United Nations mission that first tossed his former *Mad Max* pal, actor Mel Gibson. In the U.S., shoes were thrown at an image of the former U.S. president, and in New York, a shoe was thrown at a statue of the former U.S. president. In the U.S., shoes were thrown at a statue of the former U.S. president. In the U.S., shoes were thrown at a statue of the former U.S. president.

In January, Luis de la Sola, the president of Brazil, threatened to throw his *Manolo* at an unruly crowd while making a speech. In the U.S., a shoe was thrown at a statue of the former U.S. president. In the U.S., shoes were thrown at a statue of the former U.S. president.

police reports with the Washington Times, who covered the event and other shoe-throwing incidents. Then again, "it isn't just the shoe-throwing trend. Or the underwear." One of the advantages of the shoe, compared to a rock, is that you can hit the target without causing serious damage, says Kate Lam, founder of the shoe-based magazine *Shoe*. It's, in other words, a "non-violent form of protest" that has inspired the public imagination. A range of merchandise now commemorates the famous shoe. A video game called "Shoe and Shoe" lets players throw a leather shoe at a virtual president. Bush. There are shoe-throwing mouse pads, T-shirts, keychains, mugs, bags and aprons.

In fact, a shoe-throwing, shoe-throwing statue was unveiled in Selden, Hawaii's hometown of Ted Davis, but was taken down a few days later because it was considered too political. The controversial statue of the shoe-throwing statue inspired other creative ventures, too. In Wenzhou, China, customers at a store were encouraged to get a discount on a pair of shoes if they threw a shoe at a statue of the shoe-throwing statue. In the U.S., shoes were thrown at a statue of the former U.S. president. In the U.S., shoes were thrown at a statue of the former U.S. president.



THE LATEST THING IN... MEN'S COLOGNE

Just in time for the release of the latest *Star Trek* movie, biographer Gene Weir is producing three licensed fragrances for men based on the movie. The first, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, is a fragrance for men. The second, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, is a fragrance for men. The third, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, is a fragrance for men.



NOTHINGNESS is the reason the planet is going to hell, says one environmentalist who's calling for a five-year planet-wide ban on birth-

The problem with not having kids

Saving the planet for the next generation by not having a next generation is a bad idea

DAVID
STEVENS

Anything happen while I was gone?

Old, youth Theologians of the global economy: Armin giddens earns huge The con-
polymers is upon us. Down-
sized, Pyrolysis of Chlorine
has shattered the passion
uplift of "the maturity of logic" and warms
we're on the brink of the abyss. In the old
New Deal, HUR warned that "we have nothing
to fear but fear itself." For the new New
Deal, President Poliochrymogeny we have
nothing but fear itself. Get used to it. In Rus-
sia, the nation's wealthiest oligarchs have
used their net worth decline by two-thirds.
They can't resist it in fact in a deprecia-
tion. Even you'll find of Soviet makes to make with
"Every one's business is one's own" to

The online blog boomers is deflating—in Britain, the Baby Boomers are now “Baby Glomomers,” according to the *Sunday Telegraph*’s Elizabeth Gaze, who gives the impression she’s writing it up into a book proposal for one of those slim volumes of “contemporary manners and keeps in the past” (i.e., “amusingly rhetorical with line drawings of unpropitious middle-class social settings reduced to tracing the supermarket shelves for bargains ‘interbreeds’ and microwaveable ‘Indian style’ Baccarat”). In the U.S., Steven Kotler thinks this is a time when things hang on details. The planet is going to hell. So what’s the big payoff? The money comes from a waste of life?

Answer: motherhood and apple pie. If we didn't have so much motherhood, we wouldn't have all these people eating apple pies, manufactured in a plant in Guangdong and then shipped on some massive floating carbon footprint all the way to Boca Choncho in

Cedar Rapids: Motherhood is the root cause
As Mr. Keeler says:

"You don't need to ask what you need to do for the world. You already know."

"Stop having children. It's that easy."
It really is! So he's calling for a five-year

The Soviets had five-year plans but Mr. Koder wants a five-year ban—“because a billion less people is a great place to start.” Key word:

“start.” Experts agree that the carrying capacity of the planet is about two billion people. Actually, they don’t agree on the number, but two to two-and-a-half billion is the only 300 million. But Mr. Kolder doesn’t want to sound like an alarmist or anything, so he’s starting with that low-end scenario. If the planet’s carrying capacity is two-billion tops, we need to unflood a good 4% here. And, while we are outside of Dutch hospitals is arguing for compulsory euthanasia (yet), we’re adding to

By now, you may be saying: is he crazy? Not at all. He writes for *Psychology Today*. And I don't think their handy "Find A Therapist" guide is extended for their writers. Besides, there's a lot of stuff about Sir Jonathan Porritt, the British government's "sustainable-development czar," opposes "emotionally irresponsible" breeding. The *Daily Mail* found a group of Englishwomen, at the peak of their reproductive years, who decided to have themselves sterilized so "they don't

plants." As a formerly second-classer named Toni explained, "Every person who is here uses more food, more water, more land, more fossil fuels, more trees and products, more rubbish, more pollution, more greenhouse gases, and adds to the problem of overpopulation." The best way to save the planet for the next generation is not to have a next generation.

Rather less high-mindedly, the French author Camille Maupassant has a huge bestseller with her book *No Kail*, and even planted a new word in the language, abbreviating 'mise'



AMERICANS still have kids and grandkids they can saddle with multi-trillion-dollar deficits. Europeans don't.

de savoir" (i.e., borncrash or "full-crash crash") to avoid confusion with "non-shares".

Mr. Kasser argues that not everyone will sign on to his plan. But "a grassroots move [of responsible adults] in developed nations will still make a big difference, even if the average Somali, Yemeni and Afghan woman goes on having seven kids each. What he doesn't seem to have noticed is that, to all intents and purposes, "responsible adults"—i.e., liberal progressive Germans, Italians, Russians, Japanese and yes, Canadians, too—

already all but formally adopted his philosophy. Frenchwomen—who have the least natural rates in Continental Europe outside (Muslim) Albania—aren't sheding too many eggs. Without immigration, the Western world would be in steep population decline. Even with immigration, Germany and Italy are in population decline.

Like so many mystic-moralists, Mr. Kofas is zoning locally and thinking globally. It's necessary to throw out the babies to save the bathwater. As he says, "The water coming out of the tap doesn't care if it's a Persian or a Nigraun who's drinking it." So why worry if the net result of his policy is fewer neo-progressives in his part of New Mexico but business as usual in the Somali- and Afghan-minority world?

[illegible]

I said in my book [don't worry, I'm not going to plug the title—I don't want a non-“bummer rights” complaint until at least my third work back] that Europe’s demographically shriveled liberal progressives had an effect: adopted the same strategy as the 19th-century Shakers, who were forbidden to reproduce and to cooild increase their numbers only by conversion. Result: there aren’t a lot of Shakers around today. At the time,

was just the usual cheap metaphorical crack
[but] with these tube-tied earth-mother it's
literally true.

With its roots in back to the economy, many of the questions to the Jamesware Phase of Western civilization are being asked and answered and require addressing social-cultural issues from which individuals often mistakenly retreat. So be it. But the economy confronts us with the contradictions here and now. The basic assumption behind the multi-trillion dollar deficits in the U.S. is that there will be a generativity growing population to cover it, eventually. Puzo Mr. Kotler, Americans still have kids and grandkids to stick it to. Europeans don't. Yet Big Government preposses population growth—that there will be a new generation of workers to keep France's life-sustaining engines in the life scale to which they've become accustomed.

And, in a more basic sense, why did the developed world get chided by "social assets" in the first place? Well, if you go beyond the capacity of your economic growth or later it catches up with you. Australia did just this: if you use the bank's thousand dollars, you have a problem; if you overuse the bank's million dollars, the bank has a problem. But what happens if thousands of banks are used hundreds of dollars and there's no one to show the problem on the banking is really a kind of demagogic statement—a means by which all people with capital contend to young people with money and ideas. It's no coincidence that in Japan, the world's second largest bank, the banking is so controlled by the government that it's almost interestingly slow. Who do you tend to be in Germany? Or Scotland? The financial risk assessment is simply not possible in such circumstances. And what of your "assets"? The value of commercial real estate in, say, Madrid or Hamburg or Milan does presuppose a traditional growth rate that cannot apply when you're a developing area of 1.2.

The U.S. and other governments are now trying to re-inflate the global "credit bubble."

**HARLEQUIN
BESTSELLERS**
COMPILED BY HEATHER KIRKMAN

Fiction

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1 | THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO REEFER SOCIETY
by Mary Ann Shaffer and
Anne Boylston | 125 |
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by John Grisham | 113 |
| 3 | FOOL by Christopher Moore | 27 |
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| 7 | THROUGH BLACK SPRUCE
by Joseph Epstein | 93 |
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| 9 | THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON
TATTOO by Bengt Linderholm | 18 |
| 10 | THE HOUR I FIRST BELIEVED | 3 |

Non-fiction

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1 | OUTLIERS by Malcolm Gladwell | 1-02 |
| 2 | SHOCK TROOPS by Tim Cook | 05 |
| 3 | THE ASCENT OF MONEY by William Hargison | 0-04 |
| 4 | ANGELS AND ASSES by Adam Gopnick | 0-14 |
| 5 | THE VANISHED YEARS by Joe Tompkins and Tom Verducci | 0-14 |
| 6 | THE GREAT DEPRESSION ANEWAY by Barry S. Gold | 4-13 |
| 7 | THINGS I'VE BEEN SILENT ABOUT by Aziz Nizami | 0-14 |
| 8 | IN SPIRITS OF MYSELF by Christopher Plummer | 0-17 |
| 9 | ANIMALS MAKE US HUMAN by Temple Grandin | 05 |
| 10 | NOTHING TO BE FRIGHTENED OF by Julian Barnes | 0-13 |

LAST WEEK: THREE OF US

I don't think it can be done. The crisis we face is not "sustainable growth" but sustainable lack of growth. And no economist in history has ever pulled that off. ■

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MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL

Seven
habits of
highly not
fired yet
people

SCOTT
PRESCHUK

Between you and me, I'm beginning to think this "recession" may be for real and not some imaginary thing my broker made up to justify his poor performance and suicide. All of a sudden I'm regretting that my entry was so heavy an accusation and throwing things.

In recent years, millions of people across the United States, thousands across Canada and even the 20 most men point to pull down. More's the pity each morning have lost their jobs due to the severe economic downturn. Could you be next? Lord, I hope so. Anything to save my own bacon.

But assuming you don't work at Maclean's, I'm here to help.

I want you to gaze upon your workplace with fresh eyes. See those cubicles out there? That is your battlefield. Your co-workers are your enemies. Your stapler is a lone platoon of some kind—no a floppy lightbulb. Okay, the metaphor only holds together for so long, but you get the point: It's either you or you. Either your co-workers are going to eat or you're going to eat or everyone's going to get used and your co-workers are going to eat you.

To survive, you must become the MacGyver of the workplace—a person capable of saving his or her own job while armed with only a paperclip, a wad of gum and, if at all possible, a thick sheaf of photographs of the boss looking at mirrors.

Today among the ranks of the employed, you need simply to follow my Seven Habits of Highly Not Fired Yet People.

1. **Make yourself indispensable.** You can do this by working really hard and becoming more productive, but, alas, that's not a likely prospect. Just go to the CEO's back door. Also, check his house taking a surprisingly effective advantage in the short term. And remember: pranks often take a day and even of the back of

having a way in when you have access with: Two birds, one stone.

2. **Snack up.** Remember how you used to bring in an apple for your teacher? It was pathetic and even the mention of your class (especially when you physically do), but let's face it—you might have been in something dead. Put out your best fruit in something dead. Is it coffee? A hint? The blood of the world? Then plant a cup of it on his desk in a crowd.

3. **Go to the teachers.** They can't be there for the matter, can they? 4. **Go to the students.** They can't be there for the matter, can they? 5. **Go to the teachers.** They can't be there for the matter, can they? 6. **Make subtle death threats.** The keyword here is "subtle." But in another, more serious way, the keywords here are "death" and "threats." Yes, you want to read your enemies, but you also need to get your point



You could try becoming indispensable by working really hard. But, man, that's a pain.

across. For starters, try "testing" your classmate during small meetings. Go one hand, that makes you a person that everyone wants to get rid of. On the other hand—your hand, the shaly, blood splattered one—you've got a chance. Go ahead and take an extra 20 minutes for lunch. You've earned it.

7. **Divert attention from yourself.** If the end seems near, gesture theatrically to a point in space, then yell "Look—over there!" The people who've come to see you will eventually turn back in your direction, but you'll have diverted yourself from the five precious seconds. Tomorrow, Human Resources.

If all else fails, you can always try ignoring the situation and hoping it goes away. Say very little, show yourself infrequently, do the least amount of work, and keep a close eye on the door. After all, that's what Stephen Hawking's doing, and he's still got his job.

8. **Are you gay? If not, can you pretend to be?** Being perceived as openly targeting a minority is one of the greatest of any organization that isn't the Republican party. For this angle, work it, it's all about proving your heterosexual credentials. Thankfully, course

ON THE WEB: To read Preschuk on the Internet, visit his blog macleans.ca/bschuk

ALVIN B. ABERDEEN DUNCAN

1913-2009

His ancestors escaped slavery on the Underground Railroad, and he dedicated himself to black history

Alvin B. Aberdeen Duncan was born on Feb. 27, 1913, in Oakville, Ont., to Alexander and Isabella Duncan, whose ancestors escaped slavery on the Underground Railroad. The third of six children, Alvin had a "captivating soul" and outgoing nature, says younger sister Marion. Before school, his loyal cadre of friends would wait outside until he was ready. Though his many cousins he stayed out of mischief, Alvin "was straight" to at—early evidence, says Marion, of his strong will.

A short time later from New York state, Oakville had been a center for escaped slaves, and when Alvin was young, the black community numbered several hundred. They marked Reconciliation Day in August with a picnic in George Street Park. Alvin's dad, who was a painter and decorator, also served as organist and choir master at the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Along played violin, and the family often gathered around the piano to "dinner parties," says Marion. Though she says they were "accepted," racism persisted beneath the surface. When Alvin was 15, the Ku Klux Klan came to Oakville to stop a black man from marrying a white woman. The cross burning on a busy street was not something Alvin would forget.

Electronics fascinated him. After grad cutting high school, Alvin would "dabble his" way to Kingston in Toronto, where he took a radio course. When the Second World War broke out, he set his sights on joining the Royal Canadian Air Force. It took him two tries to pass the entrance exam. Then, military doctors diagnosed "his heart was on the wrong side," says friend Raymond Smith, "so a last shot to get him out." But the apparent discrimination didn't rattle Alvin, who, says Ray, "wasn't one to go first way." He confronted the doctors, and they relented. He volunteered for a secret mission in Northern Ireland, where the British were using radar to monitor the activity of ships in the North Atlantic. Of 5,000 Canadian radar operators on loan to the RAF, Alvin was one of two blacks.

While he was away, he had to be completely moonstruck. "We didn't know what happened to him," says Marion. Upon his return, he found warlord Aero Canada, which produced CP-1000 fighters during the Cold War. When the Toronto plant closed in 1955, Alvin opened a TV repair business in Oakville. He and his wife, Anita Frances, had trouble conceiving, so they took to foster kids. Even after

daughter Arlene was born, she says, "we were one big family." And just as far, Alvin shared his love of film. Walter and Billie Holiday. "There was always music in our house," says Arlene.

After his experience in the air force, Alvin began piecing together the story of Oakville's black community. His collection of books, photographs and clippings grew into "organized chaos," says Veronica Terrell, president of the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton. "He recognized that was history [and] realized that he was part of it." A veritable "fontaine de knowledge," says author Lawrence Hill, he was generous with his time and information. Before Lawrence wrote his novel *Any Known Blood*, he spent hours with Alvin, documenting his stories. (The character Aberdeen is loosely based on him.)

Alvin had been devoted for some time when he met Verda Cookson at Ontario Black History Society meetings in the '50s. Close companions, they went to community events and shared on the phone daily. Once he retired, Alvin became a regular speaker at local schools, and later his knowledge and collection to the Oakville Museum's Black History Exhibit. While telling his own story, he "has had them at the palm of his hand," says museum employee Susan Crane. When February was declared Black History Month in 1996, Alvin made no drama for the ceremony. A humble man, he didn't boast about the awards he received for his military service and community involvement, but he always sported a pin as a small reminder of his accomplishments. However, his pride for Arlene, an actress who currently plays *Pamela in Little Mosque on the Prairie*, was another story. "Everything was Alvin," says Veronica.

Privately independent, Alvin had to be talked out of renouncing his driver's license at age 90. Soon after, Alzheimer's started to encroach on his memory, and he moved into a nursing home. But he always recalled his grandsons, and when Arlow visited, he asked after them by name. In the run-up to the recent U.S. election, she brought in news stories about Barack Obama. After watching the inauguration of the first black president, he remarked, "The sun is all." The next day, Alvin suffered a stroke. On Jan. 28, he passed away. Arlene was at his funeral, which took place during Black History Month. Says Arlene, "He could not have been more tickled." BY RACHEL MEMBERSON



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